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THE
DEAN'S DAUGHTER;

OR,

THE DAYS WE LIVE IN.

BY MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS," "MRS. ARMYTAGE," "THE BANKER'S WIFE,"
&c. &c.

"Thus we play the fool with the time; and the spirits of the wise sit in the
clouds and mock us."—SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE DEAN'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

Because I breathe not love to every one,
Nor do not use set colours for to weare ;
Nor nourish special locks of vowed hair ;
Nor give each speech a full point of a groan ;
The courtly nymphs acquainted with the moan
Of them who in their lips Love's standard beare,
What, he ? say they of me—now dare I swear
He cannot love. No, no !—Let him alone.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

LET no one depreciate change of air and
scene as alleviatives of human affliction.
The world created for our use was fashioned

with a merciful regard to every human contingency ; and the gleam of winter sunshine which scarcely elicits notice from the prosperous, may have been vouchsafed to gild some squalid abode, inaccessible to earthly pity ; to irradiate the couch of the dying, or penetrate the gloomy depths of a desponding heart.

Oak Hill was a pleasant place :—one of those gardens of Eden which embellish the shores of the Medina—the Pactolus of modern luxury.

Most civilised countries exhibit some safety-valve for the effervescence of their superfluous wealth. Among the bulbous Dutch, tulips have been taught to germinate into auriferous bloom :—among the maritime Britons, yachting helps to relieve the overcharged pocket. And for such *millionnaires*, gentle or very simple, as fancy that because no game is on the wing in the month of July, canvas and bunting should be flying, Oak Hill creates a Paradise on earth.

Generally speaking, these yachting villas present a blank, except during the season of regattas. In the interim, people forget them as completely as they do the Moors in October; or Switzerland when the glaciers are double-iced. But in every season of the year, Oak Hill is a beautiful spot: the shimmer of the Solent shining through its shrubberies of evergreens, and adorning the earth with

Un pezzo del ciel caduto in terra,

possesses a peculiar charm.

William Mordaunt, who had seen the place only when the fashionable and foolish were contaminating its delicious scenery by their Latakia, and rendering it ridiculous by their exaggerated pea jackets and sou' westers, was astonished to find when, after some days quiet sojourn there, he ventured forth into the grounds, how pure and beautiful they appeared under the influence of that genial spring-time. A precocious May was bloom-

ing at Oak Hill, when February was sleeting elsewhere.

The mildness of the atmosphere even sanctioned the out-of-door lounging, which is the pleasantest of human idlenesses. For Nature wakes from her torpor in that sunny island earlier than in other English latitudes; and William Mordaunt heaved a deep sigh of relief when he contrasted the sunny lawn with the smoky market-place of R——.

We have all learned, by heart or by rote, Wordsworth's sonnet against subjection to sublunary things. We have all repeated after him, that

The world is too much with us. Early and late
Getting or spending we lay waste our powers;
Nothing we see of nature that is ours:

which may be true in our days of mirth and pastime: but in sadder moments, we turn towards her and claim our inheritance, as a hurt child flies back for consolation to its

mother's bosom. By the elastic atmosphere and balmy beauty of Oak Hill, the wounded spirit of William Mordaunt was inexpressibly comforted. As he watched the white sea birds wheeling about over the blue waters, like the Ancient Mariner, he "blessed them in their loveliness," till the burthen of his woe seemed lightened.

Hargreave was wise enough and kind enough to leave him unmolested. Alone, among those green dells and breezy lawns, the mourner was able to commune with himself; and by degrees, instead of dwelling repiningly on the past, to take thought against evil to come. He was prepared for the worst; but till Reginald arrived, who was to surmise its limits? If his uncle and brother undertook to defray the surplus debt which the sale of his father's property was insufficient to cover, he asked no more. He could go to India, in a civil or military capacity; or he was willing to undertake any decent employment at home. But

the misery tugging at his heart, the difficulty which rendered his brother's disposition towards his family so vital to its welfare, regarded Margaret. Unless the newly-married couple was prepared to love and cherish her, what was to become of that gently nurtured and gentle natured girl, so ill-prepared to make her way along the flinty paths of poverty.

Margaret, Margaret ! He seemed to see her again, arriving in her childish pride at Bassingdon ;—gradually laying aside her finery, and softening into a loving sister ; like some angel of light throwing off its disguise, a guest in the humble tents of the heathen. He seemed to see her again, ministering, in her womanly love, to the father she had so dutifully loved. He dreaded to look further. He dreaded to imagine her poor, humbled, lonely ; compelled to obtain food and raiment by dependance on the reluctant humanity of others ; or, worse still, by a distasteful marriage. “ Better hadst thou

died in infancy, dear Margaret," was his inward cry, "and slept in peace by thy mother's side!"—

He was chewing the cud of these bitter fancies, peering down upon the glassy sea from a lofty seat among the pine-trees, around which the spring flowers were already bursting into bloom; when he found that his friend had taken, unobserved, a place by his side. Dick Hargreave seemed instinctively to guess that there were reflections from which it was expedient he should be diverted.

"What a fortunate change of weather, my dear Bill,—what a divine spring day!" said he, taking the cigar from his mouth. "Why on earth should invalids attempt a long rugged journey to Italy in quest of health, when such sunny nooks as these are to be found at home!"

Concluding that he alluded to Lord Miltenhall, William replied that sick people were usually driven to Italy by physicians who found them troublesome patients; or by

their own family, weary of the sameness of home.

“I verily believe,” he added “that my cousin Anne and her mother planned my uncle’s exile only to entice Reginald away from all of us; and get the marriage hurried over where he was safe from influence and remonstrance.”

“You do not entertain a very flattering impression of your sister-in-law.”

“The most self-seeking pragmatistical creature:—the pattern young lady of the neighbourhood of Mildenhall Abbey. Her elder sisters were good-humoured, harmless women, content to marry squires, and, as the story books say, live happy ever afterwards. But Anne, on the strength of a certain sedateness of self-esteem, set up for a superior woman. Assert such a position gravely and obstinately, and fools will always be found to come and bow to it. She has imposed upon Regy—who looks up to her as infallible. But as even a boy, she did not think it worth while

to make up to *me*, I saw through her pretensions. I used to call her Professor Nancy : for which she detested me as I deserved."

"Her nature may soften, now that her purpose is accomplished," said Hargreave, extenuatingly. "Yonder ship does not strain and creak now she is riding at anchor ; though she probably made herself disagreeable enough in contest with a head wind."

"Anne Mordaunt has certainly managed to anchor herself in pleasant waters !" rejoined William. "Nor can I blame her for having clung to the possession of Mildenhall Abbey."

"A noble old place, they say. I was shooting with Harry Hartwell in that neighbourhood, last year ; and was struck by the grandeur of the woods glooming in the horizon."

"The finest timber in England ! One proof among many that the Mildenhalls have long expected to retain the property by marriage, in their branch of the family,

is the liberality with which my uncle has dealt with those same woods. He has brought *them* up far better than his daughters."

"A peer of the realm who looks to his oaks instead of *The Oaks*, does some good in his generation," said Dick Hargreave, drily.

"True enough! But he would do as much good, and look the character better, as Lord Mildenhall's forester, than as Lord Mildenhall's self," retorted William. "So different from my father!—My father was such a thorough gentleman in air and habits. *He* would have been indeed in his place at the Abbey.—*He* would have done honour to his position."

Dick Hargreave respected the filial piety of his friend too sincerely to hint that the late Dean was of all men the least competent to fulfil the duties of a great landed proprietor, or that the woods of Mildenhall would probably have undergone some combing under his sway.

"I have so often—God forgive me—

looked forward to welcome you hereafter at the Abbey," resumed William. "My uncle's state was some justification. But I so longed to show you the picture gallery, containing the finest Lelys and Knellers extant except in the royal collections."

"Shall I shock you by owning that I don't care a straw for either?" replied his companion. "I'm afraid I have no genius for the Fine Arts. My sisters declare (having closed all the doors and windows first, and even then they say it in a whisper,) that it is a proof of the Manchester taint in my plebeian blood."

"But Sir Thomas is a decided dilettante."

"Not more so than myself. The old pictures you admire so much at Dursley were thrown into the sale of the house and furniture by the Duke of Hereford's agent. My father buys only the works of living artists."

"No stigma on his taste, I hope? I would as soon have a Turner as a Claude—sooner a Landseer than a Snyders."

“Ours are neither Turners nor Landseers. Even to *me* they appear gaudy, dauby things. But you should hear Sir Claude Fanshawe on the subject! On our first acquaintance, he thought us improvable people,—people who might be licked into shape. My father has an air of candour and amenability which imposes upon your very clever men; and Sir Claude did not see into the obstinacy and absolutism of his character.”

William remonstrated. His heart was not in a state, just then, to hear “governors” lightly spoken of.

“Your magnanimity is thrown away, Bill,” persisted Dick. “My father would be proud to hear himself called obstinate and opinionated. He regards these qualities as the strong points of his character. But to return to Sir Claude. The first time he dined with us in town, he took my father to task about his pictures, like an usher blowing up a schoolboy for a foul copy. As a Trustee of the National Gallery, and a

Director of the British Institution, &c., &c., he felt it his duty to reprove the rich calico-printer for his depravity of taste."

"He surely did not venture?"—

"Why not? To mortify his rich, upstart host, consoled Sir Claude for his own empty pockets. My father, however, stood up bravely for his pictures, and talked about *his* duty of patronising rising merit, in a *tu quoque* tone that was highly edifying to the company."

"My dear Dick!"

"But mark the result! Sir Claude, finding that his hectoring did not pay—though Barty Tomlinson has since made it answer tolerably in our house—found out, before the following season, that the pictures were wonderfully toned down. 'After all, my dear Hargreave,' I heard him say to my father, with undaunted assurance, 'you were right, and I was wrong, about those pictures. *I* judged them when just taken from the

easel, and thought them a little crude. They are turning out all you foresaw in them !' which my father swallowed, as he does too much of Sir Claude's humbug, whether administered in strychnine or molasses."

"You don't seem over partial to Herbert Fanshawe's father."

"Still less to Herbert Fanshawe's father's son. I like his company. No one amuses me more. His high animal spirits enliven my dull nature. But I am instinctively on my guard against him. It would never surprise me to find Herbert Fanshawe's hand in my pocket, or his dagger in my back !"

"You are *too* hard upon him," pleaded William, gravely.

"I trust I may be mistaken. But I watched him closely at one time ; because I had been the means of introducing him into our family circle, and perceived that he entertained some intention of making it his own."

“Of course, by marrying one of your sisters.”

“He affected to be much struck by Emma; and I feared she might be in some danger from his ingratiating manners.”

“The affair is off, then?”

“It never was what is called *on*. And Emma is clearly not of a romantic turn, for she has just announced to me her engagement to Sir Hurst Clitheroe.”

“The new member for R——?”

“Precisely. They are to be married at Easter.”

William hastily offered his congratulations. He wanted to resume their previous conversation.

“Herbert Fanshawe, I fancy,” said he, “is still at Paris.”

“Ay! with Sir Claude. He could scarcely be in worse company. *Your* father, Mor-daunt, may have been an imprudent man. Mine may not know a Guido from a Raphael; nay, may be as absolute as a Turk. But, by

Jove ! I would as soon have Jonathan Wild for a parent as Sir Claude Fanshawe ! Herbert's faults are wholly of *his* inoculating. Sir Claude is an arch-type of modern hypocrisy—a concentration of diplomatic tact. With him, the Decalogue is superseded by an eleventh commandment, of 'Thou shalt not be found out.' ”

“ You are strangely bitter, Dick, about these Fanshawes.”

“ Am I ? Perhaps I am. But I have no reason—that is, I have no *right* to be so. How gloriously that steamer is rounding off Calshot ! ” said he abruptly, pointing out a first-rate Oriental, which was

Walking the waters like a thing of life.

“ What a noble object !—What a triumph of human ingenuity.”—

“ I suppose I shall learn to say so, if I realise my hope of a cadetship,” rejoined William. “ An overland mail that brings

me news in India from Margaret, will seem a finer vessel than the *Victory*."

"It would almost reconcile *me*, on the contrary, to Eastern exile," observed Dick Hargreave, "to be secure against receiving letters above once a month."

"Letters of business, perhaps; not letters from a sister."

"Letters from *my* sisters are dryer than the dryest ever concocted in Great St. Helen's. *They* are not Miss Mordaunts, nor am I, you will say, Miss Mordaunt's brother. You must have seen how little my sisters care about me. Emma, especially, regards me as a dead-weight on the prospects of the family."

"If you speak seriously, you are unjust."

"I speak quite seriously, and am as just as Aristides. At Dursley, I am looked upon as a cub. ('An unmitigated snob' is Barty Tomlinson's name for the disorder.) The worst of it is, their female friends derive

from them the same estimate of my merits. Whatever fair face arrives at Dursley, is sure to frown upon me, or smile ironically, before many days are over. Now own the truth, Mordaunt ! Did not your sister tell you, on her return home from our house, how great a brute she thought me ?"—

The question was a trying one. For William was a poor dissembler ; and had not forgotten how exactly Margaret's opinion coincided with the conjectures of his friend.

"It would be scarcely fair," said he, "to reveal a young lady's confidence. But I may say, without indiscretion, that Margaret is the most lenient of human judges. Margaret thinks *no one* a brute. She is apt to entertain only kindly impressions."

Whether this ambiguous sentence satisfied Dick Hargreave's misgivings would be hard to say ; for he had risen from his seat, and was knocking out the ashes of his cigar against the bole of the pine-tree overshadowing it.

"Besides," continued William, relieved on finding the eyes of his friend directed elsewhere, "you exaggerate your own Orsonism. You get so much into the habit of calling yourself Bruin, that to justify your words, you are fain to behave as such."

"You would prefer to have me quoting French novels, mouthing German ballads, and painting in pastel?" replied Dick. "No, no !—

I'd rather be a dog, and bay the moon,

than such a Fanshawe !"

"I would willingly see you less addicted to wearing your seamy side outwards !" replied his friend. "And I will tell you *why*, if you wish it.—*Shall* I tell you?—*Dare* I tell you?"—

Dick Hargreave smilingly defied him to say his worst.

"Because you enjoy so many worldly

advantages, that many of the envious will not scruple to call you—" he paused.

"To call me—"

"*Purse proud!*"

"By Jove! you have made me feel as if I had trodden upon an adder!" cried Hargreave, starting and laughing. "Money enters so little into my personal calculations, that I should have as soon expected to find myself called a soothsayer! But the hint will not be wasted; and I heartily thank you. But who have we here? By all that's awful, Robert, with the letter bag! Pandora's box, my dear Mordaunt, of which I have not the key in my pocket. Our day's pleasure is over. Come with me into the house; and let us make ourselves thoroughly uncomfortable. As Herbert Fanshawe is fond of quoting from Henri III., '*Venons à la croisée, mon mignon : et ennuyons-nous—ennuyons-nous bien!*' "

CHAPTER II.

A mean and dreamlike trade of greed and guile,
Too foolish for a tear—too wicked for a smile.

COLERIDGE.

MARGARET MORDAUNT, meanwhile, was welcomed by the female portion of the Hargreave family with the tenderness due to her affliction; and by Sir Thomas, with the consideration due to the imaginary heiresship he had assigned her. As sister to the future Lord Mildenhall, she was nearly as worthy to become his daughter-in-law, as though her father had survived the Viscount.

The Lord Chamberlain's Office, or College of Arms, might still convert her into the

Honourable Miss Mordaunt; and that the Honourable Miss Mordaunt should merge in the Honourable Mrs. Hargreave, he was fully determined. The escutcheons recently exhibited at the gorgeous funeral in R—— Cathedral, seemed to have dazzled his eyes; and having returned immediately after it to Dursley Park, no sinister rumours had as yet reached his ears.

He resented, therefore, his son's absence from home at a crisis highly favourable to his matrimonial projects. Margaret's heart was so softened by grief, and her gentle beauty just then so touching, that Sir Thomas thought it impossible for even the rugged Richard to preserve his indifference.

“Richard, it seems, took himself off to town, the moment my excellent friend the Dean was consigned to the grave,” said he, addressing his wife. “Pray write to him immediately, Lady Hargreave. Write to him in Berkeley Square; and say I require him at home. Let him know that Sir Hurst

Clitheroe will be here early next week; and that the family must be collected to receive him."

To Berkeley Square, accordingly, Lady Hargreave addressed one of her mollified editions of the ukase of the autocrat of Dursley. And though, when forwarded to Oak Hill, the threat of Sir Hurst Clitheroe's indignation at his absence produced little effect on Dick Hargreave, the letter was welcome, as containing allusions to Margaret.

"Miss Mordaunt is still absorbed in affliction," wrote Lady Hargreave. "But we leave her to herself, hoping she will learn submission to the dispensation of the Almighty, as in duty bound. She has not left her room, where your sisters sit with her an hour morning, and evening. It will be inconvenient should she long continue so low. For when Sir Hurst arrives, we must of course see company, in order to introduce him to our neighbours."

Though grieved at the prospect of leaving Oak Hill, the seclusion of which had proved so tranquillising to the excited nerves of his friend, Dick Hargreave instantly determined to obey his father's injunctions. Better he should be on the spot to exercise his influence, such as it was, over his family, to secure poor Margaret from molestation. He was afraid—he was grievously afraid—that when the real position of the Mordaunts' affairs came to be known at Dursley, they would sink from demi-gods into mortals.

At R——, the downfall of the family was already complete. The reaction of all groundless excitements is extravagant ; and the once popular Dean, originally indebted for his reputation of sanctity to a bald head, a Roman profile, and lymphatic temperament, had been at once decanonized as an impostor. The word is a hard one ; but it was uttered without compunction by the hardest among the nine thousand seven hundred and thir-

teen inhabitants of R——, the money-changers of its Temple, and Pharisees of its Cathedral Close.

With the exaggeration usual to provincial gossip, it was reported that the Dean had died enormously in debt; having spent his childrens' fortunes, and made on his death-bed a fraudulent assignment of a policy of insurance to his London solicitors. "He had died just in time to prevent a complete crash, and public exposure;—*just* in time—conveniently in time."—Some people hinted that there ought to be an inquest. The medical men were heard to whisper, that the family and confidential servants of the deceased had frustrated their remedies, and refused a *post mortem* examination. "No one but the son and valet of Dean Mordaunt had been admitted into his room. Nay, Mr. Mathan, the universally-respected clerk of Lazenby and Son, had found it next to impossible to obtain an interview with Mr. William Mordaunt; so careful was he not to

leave the body a moment unwatched. If *that* was not suspicious, they should like to know what *was* !—Between friends, there certainly ought to have been an inquest.” An inquest, on suspicion of *felo de se*, upon a man restrained through life by fear of personal risk, from taking a second teaspoonful of magnesia !—

The scandal, however, was not the less prevalent for its absurdity ; and though the Cathedral Close preserved a dignified silence, it transpired, through the Lazenbys, that Archdeacon Pleydell, the unloving friend of the late Dean, had declined the executorship assigned by his will. Again, the chorus of the nine thousand, seven hundred and thirteen was heard to cry that if *that* was not suspicious, they should like to know what *was* !

Priggins and Bradyll, the haberdashers, overlooking the amount of mode and crape they had furnished for the funeral, began to jot up what they had lost by closing their shop for a couple of hours ; and the minor performers

in that pompous pageant, hearing it reported that not a shilling of remuneration would be forthcoming, began to grumble in attorneys' offices, and clamour in ale-houses, about the imposition practised on them, and the evil example of the Church.

Such was the order of the day at R——, as reported at Dursley, by Sir Hurst Clittheroe, on his arrival from a passing visit to his constituents; and the picture lost nothing by the hand which undertook to paint it.

Sir Hurst was a man as specifically the growth of the times we live in, as an eel of the mud. Born of an obscure north country family and bred to the law, he had succeeded by the unexpected death of intervening relatives, to a moderate competence; and, at fifty years of age, found himself beginning life anew, as a gentleman, after fagging through a quarter of a century as a country attorney. Most men would have been content to take the goods the gods provided, and enjoy their *otium* without *dignitate* for the

remainder of their days. But Clitheroe, like a Yankee who takes to whittling his mahogany table rather than leave his fingers idle, was essentially a man of business, and miserable out of sight of an ink-bottle. Even 'sises and sessions were insufficient to occupy his morbid activity of mind; and, as chairman of one thriving railway company, and shareholder in a dozen others, he contrived to double his occupations and his fortune. His name was stereotyped in county newspapers. After officiating as High Sheriff, and being knighted at the head of a deputation, he was now very generally mistaken for an independent country gentleman.

An independent country gentleman naturally finds his way into Parliament; and, in process of time, obtains currency in the London clubs and political circles. But though the initials M.P. affixed to the name of Sir Hurst, in some degree obliterated the ignominy of knighthood, in his own county, he still found it impossible to obtain a seat.

Fortune, in the shape of a parliamentary agent, discovered a vacancy for him at R——; and the free and independent electors, included in the aggregate of 9,713 souls, were delighted to be represented by a Sir Hurst Anybody, who talked as if his lungs were of caoutchouc, and paid his way as freely as is usual with people of fluctuating income. Having become their representative by a job, they were not afraid of finding him inconveniently consciencious; and there was accordingly much sympathy of sentiment between the borough and its member.

The first landed proprietor in the neighbourhood to extend a hand to the new comer, was Sir Thomas Hargreave. For Sir Thomas was not sorry to propitiate a supporter in the House; and understood the advantage of being on good terms with a nobody who wanted to become somebody by dint of stirring up the miasma of stagnant abuses, and pretending to cleanse with a dusting-brush the Augean stable of political corruption.

Fraternize they did, therefore, and readily. Sir Hurst Clitheroe, M.P., was dazzled by the brilliant hospitality of Dursley Park. Aware that the social position he wished to acquire, is never substantiated without a wife and family to perfect its cubic structure, he had long been on the look-out for an *alter idem*; and a Lady Clitheroe, obtained from such a school as that of Dursley, would be indeed a godsend. It consoled him for the half dozen rebuffs he had sustained in his own neighbourhood, when, after a fortnight's courtship in rainy, home-staying weather, and having satisfied Sir Thomas that his income amounted to a sufficient number of thousands a-year, the fair Emma accepted his hand. Wounded vanity, smarting under the desertion of Herbert Fanshawe, pleaded successfully in his favour; nor could white favours and a diamond necklace have presented themselves more opportunely.

Sir Thomas, on the other hand, was delighted with his future son-in-law. Between

them there was similarity of taste, and sympathy of pursuit. Both were intensely greedy of family aggrandisement. Both delighted in despatch of business. Both fancied that consorting with great people was a step towards achieving greatness. Both were pious worshippers at the altar-stone of Baal. The Baronet would have been better pleased had the knight been a *little* more than ten years his junior. But that was Emma's affair; and Sir Hurst Clitheroe's patent ventilating peruke was so artistic and so becoming, and his garrulous activity endowed him with so jaunty an air, that, since the days of the Prince Regent, never was middle-aged gentleman so juvenile.

Such was the individual who, little surmising the views of Sir Thomas upon his afflicted guest, announced, with contemptuous commiseration, that she was a pauper. While the servants were still in attendance, he talked of Dean Mordaunt's affairs as coolly as he would have done of some em-

barrassed railway line; adding, that nothing better than insolvency was to have been expected of a poor, inert, yea-nay, hypochondriac, like the Dean; governed by upper servants, and shuddering at the sight of an account-book.

The Hargreaves were horror-struck; and as the tale of ruin gradually developed and confirmed itself, the failure of the Will Cause—the estrangement of the insurance money—the revival of Lord Mildenhall—Sir Thomas began to feel that he had been swindled. Though certainly no one had taken him in but Sir Thomas Hargreave, he was furious against his deceiver. His first care, however, was to prevent his disappointment from becoming apparent. He chose to maintain his superiority by remaining infallible in the eyes of his son-in-law. The amount of their comparative fortunes was matter for arithmetic. The striking of their mental balance must depend upon himself.

“Let me ask you as a favour, my dear

Sir Hurst," said he, "to keep this unhappy business as close as you can, particularly in presence of the servants; who might convey rumours on the subject to Miss Mordaunt's attendant. I need not tell you that I have long been pretty well aware of the state of poor Dean Mordaunt's affairs. But so anxious am I to prevent the feelings of any member of the family from being annoyed, that I have not, even to my own, confided my alarm."

"No! that I am sure you have not, my dear!" confirmed Lady Hargreave, eagerly. "I always fancied, on the contrary, that poor, dear Miss Mordaunt was an heiress."

"So did we all," added Julia. "When the Dean first came to Dursley, you stipulated, papa, that every possible attention should be paid to his daughter. You told me to make her feel at home among us."

"We owe the utmost delicacy, my dear, to merit in distress."

“And I recollect you desired that she might have the blue silk rooms,” added Lady Hargreave; “which had never been used before, except for Lady Delavile and Lady Fitzmorton!”

“But do you suppose, papa,” inquired Emma, whose growing importance as a bride elect, entitled her to ask questions, “that, though *you*, who know most things, suspected all was not right at the Deanery, poor Margaret herself is aware of the truth?”—

“I doubt whether any of the Dean’s children could be fully aware of the real state of the case. And yet, in William Mordaunt’s letter to your mother, accepting our invitation to his sister, there was a tone of deprecation I never noticed in him before.”

“Then depend upon it, papa,” interposed Julia, conscious of a former weakness in favour of the son of the popular Dean, “depend upon it, he was wholly in the dark.

Mr. Mordaunt is one of the proudest young men I ever knew—that is, not proud, but highminded. I never saw any one careless for money. Had he supposed himself a beggar, he would have been careful to maintain his dignity.”

“In that case, he must be a sad ass!” said Sir Hurst Clitheroe, glad that it was his future sister-in-law, and not his future wife, who gave utterance to such a platitude. “However, the world, no easy taskmaster, will give him a lesson or two before it has done. To be nephew to a Viscount will not put bread into his mouth.”

“Great talents, and a good education may possibly put *cake* into his mouth,” rejoined Julia, tartly; a remark disastrous to the Mordaunts, for it suddenly occurred to Sir Thomas that he had formerly encouraged the attentions paid to Julia by the son of the Dean. Nor was the case amended when his daughter added: “My brother has the highest esteem and affection for Mr.

Mordaunt. They were at College together, and Dick is satisfied that his friend will make a great figure in the world."

Sir Hurst glanced at the heads of the family, as much as to say, "Aha! you must look to this." But to him, the poor Mordaunts, or rather the Mordaunts poor, were a very secondary consideration. And as the city article of the 'Times,' which Sir Hurst had brought in his pocket, happened to announce a rise of five eighths in the three per cents, and a fall of £2 per share in a railway in which both the knight and baronet were largely involved, the two money-spinners were soon deep in discussions which drove the female portion of the family out of the room.

Julia and Emma Hargreave, when alone together, naturally recurred to the consideration of poor Margaret's affairs. That she was either ignorant of the evil which had befallen her, or still more ignorant of human nature, was in their opinion clearly apparent.

For her candid nature had been unable to conceal from them how sanguinely she was expecting the arrival of Herbert Fanshawe; and they abounded far too much in the hateful knowingness conferred by a fashionable education, to suppose it possible that under existing circumstances she could reckon on the fidelity of such a worldling.

And now, what was to be done. Were they to continue rendering her the homage due to a princess, till some disagreeable rumour from without startled her into the knowledge that she was a pauper? Was she to be the cause of excluding all society from the house, and stripping the wedding solemnities of Sir Hurst and Lady Clitheroe of half their splendours? She really ought to be enlightened! Julia, better natured than her sister, declared at once that it was out of *her* power to breathe to Margaret a syllable capable of giving her pain; and she proposed, and her mother and sister assented, that to

William Mordaunt should be left the task of apprising their ill-fated guest of the truth.

In a family so gold-nurtured as the Hargreaves, poverty figures as a

Gordon, Hydra, or chimera dire,—

the one prodigious evil of human life. To these young girls, therefore, fondled in the eider-down lap of luxury, a pauper was a leper,—an epileptic person,—smitten by the reprobation of providence ;—an object of pity amounting almost to terror.—When next they visited Margaret, it needed all the blindness produced by deep affliction, to prevent her perceiving a sort of constrained awe in their manner of addressing her. They looked upon her, as the ancients regarded some member of a race persecuted by the vengeance of the Gods.

In a letter to her aunt Martha, whom she was under the irksome necessity of inviting to her forthcoming nuptials, Emma adverted

in piteous terms, to the sad fate of their guest.

“You were so much interested during your late visit here, dear aunt,” wrote she “by the pretty, shy, young daughter of the Dean of R——, that I am sure you will be sorry to hear she is left perfectly destitute. Her father died dreadfully in debt; and unless her mother’s sister, (who married some methodist parson and is furious against the Mordaunts on account of a lawsuit) should take her as companion, or her relations the Mildenhalls, whom she has never seen, should make her an allowance, your *protégée* will have to be a governess, or starve. She is now on a visit here. But of course, as the wedding draws near, her remaining with us will be out of the question.”

The following morning, when the two girls proceeded to visit Margaret, they were surprised by her abruptly informing them that their brother would arrive at Dursley in the course of the day.

“Richard?”—exclaimed Julia, “I think you are mistaken. My father and mother have heard nothing of him for ages. Papa mentioned just now at the breakfast-table that he could not imagine what was become of him.”

“Mr. Hargreave has been at the Isle of Wight.”

“Have you, then, received a letter?” said Emma, a little astonished.

“From my brother William, who has been staying with Mr. Hargreave, at Oak Hill.”

“Dick is the most inscrutable being!” said Emma, pettishly. “To be idling in the Isle of Wight, at a time when it is as desolate as the Isle of Dogs, when he was so particularly wanted at home.”

“You hear that he is *coming* home!” pleaded Julia, kindly.

“Yes, no thanks to him! *Not* because I wrote to beg him to meet Sir Hurst—not because it is only decent, just now, for the

family to be together;—but simply because Mr. Mordaunt is coming to R——, and he does not like him to be alone. Dick cares far more for strangers, than for any member of his family.”

Margaret was startled by the bitter tone in which these accusations were uttered. Except Lady Milicent, she had never heard one of her own sex speak so harshly.

When, a few hours afterwards, William made his appearance, the poor girl threw herself into her brother's arms, and clung to him, with all the earnestness of love with which sorrow and loneliness invest the ties of kindred blood; when the world frowns upon us, and those who call themselves our friends so often omit to qualify themselves for their usurped title.—

CHAPTER III.

The sounds that round about me rise,
Are what none other hears ;
I see what meets no other eyes,
Though mine are dim with tears.

HENRY TAYLOR.

THE austere churchman whose fate it was to succeed to the important benefice of Dean Mordaunt, ran little risk of emulating his fatal popularity. A single glance at his overhanging brow, forbidding mouth, and low square figure, showed him preordained to become the unpopular Dean of R——. No suavity of deportment, no amenity of mind, none of those exterior graces of Christianity

which are to the priest as the rich binding to a missal.

But nobody judges Martin Luther upon his personal showing; why be more severe with the Very Reverend Isaac Barnes? a man whose orthodoxy was as that of Latimer or Tillotson, and whose brain-pan contained the authority of a whole convocation.

On his arrival at R——, the peculiar circumstances attending the estate of the late Dean, determined him to accept the hospitality of the Pleydells, with whom he was connected by marriage. But though he closed his ears against the censorious gossip of the Archdeacon's lady, there were evil reports connected with the death of his predecessor, whereof to remain ignorant was impossible.

He heard them with profound regret and pity; for the scandal thus created was injurious to the Church he loved. And albeit, the late Dean, with his bald head and Roman features might do honour to his stall, never

had Reginald Mordaunt looked half so much the Christian priest, as the undersized, hard-featured Isaac Barnes when he sternly exhorted the old verger to listen sparingly to strictures upon his late master; to forbear from vilifying those who were no longer able to plead in their own defence; and, above all, to observe the teaching of St. Paul to the Galatians: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: lest ye also be tempted."

On his own part, the new Dean was resolved to examine carefully the rumours afloat, ere he came to the conviction that a man of birth and education, a lifelong minister of the Anglican church, had been guilty of the acts vulgarly imputed to his predecessor; and his caution was fully justified by the result. It soon appeared that on the very day he had been persuaded to sign away his policy of insurance, the late Dean had opened negotiations for a

similar amount, on terms which would have reduced his already incumbered income to a fourth of its nominal value. Deeds were already prepared for signature which would have secured this ample provision to his children.

As regarded his personal estate, and outstanding debts,—the latter, exclusive of his exorbitant funeral expenses, amounted to a trifle; while the former, quadrupled all expectation. It was ascertained and carefully circulated by the new Dean, that Dr. Mordaunt's listlessness concerning his expenditure, was more than extended to the incomings of his fortune: that if a careless, he was far from a rapacious man. More than a year of his professional income was found unclaimed. Important fines due to him had never been levied. Money was owing to him on all sides: from the rectory of Mildenhall, from the Chapter of R——, from private friends. If he had suffered

collegiate rights to fall into desuetude, he had been nobly indifferent to his own. So far from Lazenby and Son having suffered by his demise, they had only to repay themselves their thirty pieces of silver out of the treasury of the Chapter for which they officiated.

That in the common course of nature, Dean Mordaunt had expected to survive a brother twenty-two years his senior, and profit by the survival to establish his children in opulence, was scarcely to be blamed; and between the two sins, of over much or over little carefulness for the things of this world, he had perhaps chosen the least offensive in the sight of God.

But with this apology, ended the mercy of the Dean. He defended the erring brother who was gone to his account, with the nicest sense of justice, and kindest sense of forbearance. But when he came to judge him as a faithless servant and soldier of

Christ, who had suffered the discipline of the Church Militant to sink into insubordination, he became ruthless as a Druid.

His words of reprobation were few ; for those with whom he abided were among the delinquents corrupted by Dean Mordaunt's administrative lenity. But he pondered deeply and severely on the criminality of one who had depreciated the authority of the crosier ; albeit that weak man's carelessness enabled him to exercise what *he* believed to be the greatest of virtues. The sturdy Churchman, a bitter reformer, loved to cut to the root of an evil, and extirpate it for ever ; to guide the ploughshare of ecclesiastical privilege over the rough places ; not only to weather the storm, but to subdue the troubled waters. His spiritual rule was maintained with a rod of iron.

There was no latent thought in his severity. The Dean was neither sordid nor ambitious. But he prized priestly power for the sake of priestly power, as the loftiest of

constituted authorities; and, in the olden time, would have ridden his elephant as proudly as Eleazar. The consequence was, that before three months had elapsed after the gorgeous funeral of Margaret's father, his successor, the restorer of obsolete forms and discarded observances—the exactor of neglected examinations and forgotten dues—was at variance with his Diocesan, at enmity with the Chapter, and detested by three parts of the nine thousand seven hundred and thirteen inhabitants of R——.

William Mordaunt and his sister, meanwhile, were spared all knowledge of the calumnious reports so painfully affecting the character of their father. A few urgent letters from tradespeople had compelled William to look into the family affairs earlier than custom warranted; and though the refusal of Archdeacon Pleydell and Mr. Wraxley to act as executors, necessitated delay, ere it could be ascertained whether the eldest son, who had no interest under

the will, would take out letters of administration, it was easy to satisfy the creditors that, out of the seven or eight thousand pounds already paid to the bankers of the estate, their claims would be fully liquidated.

The chief remaining difficulty arose from the silence of Reginald ; but, as the Mildenhall family was known to be on its road to Rome, their letters might not have reached them.

Still, though ignorant of the scandal attaching to his position,—and though, from the moment of his arrival at Dursley, the aspect of his glowing eye and athletic frame imposed silence on the wiggy member for R——, —William discerned, with ready susceptibility, that, as regarded the Hargreaves, he stood in an altered position. The overstrained civility of the family, both to himself and Margaret, proved to him that they were considered in the way. During the preparations for the wedding, Sir Thomas and his future son-in-law were to repair to town for

the discharge of their parliamentary duties ; and William was almost made to understand that, even if Margaret remained, it would be scarcely decorous for *him* to sojourn at Dursley during their absence.

He was becoming inured to mortifications ; yet who can describe the thrill which freezes one's very marrow, on finding the being dearest to our hearts subjected to undeserved humiliation ! The discovery that Margaret was eating bread that was grudged her, caused all the blood in his veins to ebb back to his heart. He could make allowance for the Hargreaves. To have two mourners like himself and his sister, roosting like ravens on their roof-tree, when they wished it to resound with bridal merriment, must be vexatious. Still, Margaret's sad and lovely face might have softened less worldly hearts.

He thought so, with tears in his eyes, when, on entering her dressing-room for the purpose of a painful explanation, a few days after his arrival, he found her occupied with

some sort of homely needlework ; a scarcely tasted breakfast lying unremoved on the table.

“ You should exert yourself to breakfast with the family, dearest girl,” said he. “ Sir Thomas inquired, this morning, whether they were not likely to see you down stairs before he quitted Dursley. And you know what such a question, on the part of such a man, means to imply. We should be careful not to give unnecessary trouble in the houses of others. Darling Margaret ! we are fallen in the world. We must not lose sight of our narrowed fortunes.”

He could say no more, for Margaret's tears were already falling. It was necessary to soothe rather than reprove her.

“ I had been already thinking,” said she, when she regained the power of utterance, “ that it might be desirable for me to conclude my visit to Lady Hargreave before this house becomes crowded for Emma's marriage. My room may, perhaps, be wanted. Yesterday,

they put on chintz covers to the fine furniture, and told me it was by Lady Hargreave's order, because the silk was becoming faded by such constant use. A trifle, you will say ; but I understood it as a hint that I had been here long enough."

William Mordaunt muttered a few angry words, among which the name of Lady Hargreave was unpleasantly audible.

"We have no right to blame her," remonstrated Margaret. "We are nothing to the Hargreaves, except that you were a College acquaintance of their son."

"A college *friend* !" was William's marked emendation. "And such a friend as he has been to me ! But that is not the question. I am afraid, Margaret, you would do well to spend a few weeks with Mrs. Pleydell. Not as a pleasant thing. I do not expect you to like her company better than you used, or to find Esther less tiresome. But the Arch-deacon's is a quiet house—a safe home ; and the Pleydells were such old and valued

friends of our poor dear father, that by them your feelings would be respected."

Margaret acquiesced. She knew it was her duty to acquiesce.

"I will write to Mrs. Pleydell," said she. "She proposed to me to become her inmate for as long a time as suited me; and I am, therefore, privileged to propose myself. She was too deeply attached to my poor father to refuse the request."

"Refuse!" repeated William, proudly.

But he checked himself. It was not for *him* to teach lessons of pride to his sister.

"There is another reason, darling," he resumed, "which renders it, perhaps, indelicate for you to be just now an inmate of this house. You cannot be ignorant of the strong attachment entertained for you by my friend Dick Hargreave."

"Attachment?—Indeed I *am*,"—she replied. "No young man of our acquaintance has paid me less attention. If you think he

cares for me more than as your sister, believe me you are mistaken."

"I *know* that he cares for you more than as my sister. And we ought to avoid placing ourselves in such a position with the Hargreaves, as to surprise them out of their consent when it comes to be asked for."

"It never *will* be asked for."

"You deceive yourself, Margaret. Richard is firmly bent on making you his wife. He confided to me on our road hither, that he had no other hope or ambition in this world."

Margaret turned deathly pale. When her brother kissed her fondly on the cheek, as if in congratulation upon her happy prospects, she could not utter a word.

"Like *you*, dear Meg, continued he, "I was long uncertain about Dick Hargreave's sentiments. I thought him cold towards you—at first, almost uncivil. Nay, I was half inclined to quarrel with him for a fancied

slight at that confounded ball, more than a year ago."

"I remember," said Margaret, faintly.

"I did not make allowance for his shyness — his diffidence. The rest of the family are so different, that I misinterpreted his unassuming nature. It turns out, however, that the poor fellow was passionately in love with you at that very time. It was love at first sight, Margaret. Do you remember the skating party? He lost his heart that very day, when you sat by my poor dear father's side—so happy and cheerful in that dull old Deanery! Just as a woman ought to be seen—just as a woman ought to be loved!"—

Lucky that William was not likely to tire of hearing himself sing the praises of Dick Hargreave; or he must have been struck by the woeful countenance of his companion.

"You will make him the happiest of mortals," he resumed, "and so repay my infinite obligations. I don't believe there

exists in the world such another kind-hearted fellow, or honourable man. You have drawn a prize, Meg. As to me, I would lay down my life for him. And it is honestly his own, too ; for had it not been for the kindness of Dick Hargreave, on that wretched evening of my father's funeral, by heavens ! I should have cut my throat."

Margaret shuddered.—Was it for her brother ?—Was it for herself ?—

"But my dear little sister will make him the best of little wives," continued William, embracing her. "As to his family, Meg, they are not, certainly, all one could desire. There is not the making of a gentleman or lady in the whole tot of them. But they are as kindly disposed towards you, as might not have been the case with people more refined. Dick informs me that the thing which cooled his ardour towards you at first, was the arbitrary manner in which an alliance with you was urged upon him by his father. So you see, darling, not a single objection exists.

An unhoped for consolation, after all my recent cares!"—

He paused; and looked towards her for a reply. The despairing countenance which met his view, spoke far more eloquently than words.

"Forgive me!" was all his sister could utter. But it was answer enough for William.

"Margaret!" cried he, starting up and clasping his hands. "Don't tell me that this marriage is disagreeable to you!—Don't tell me that you dislike my friend, Dick Hargreave? He told me so, and I would not believe him!" continued William. "I *could* not credit such a misfortune!—Great God! will *nothing* in this world prosper with us!—Is there some besetting curse attached to our fatal destiny!"

Margaret arose, and leaned, weeping, upon his shoulder.

"I am wrong, I know, to aggravate your troubles, Willy," said she, when some degree of composure was restored between them:

“but would you have me deceive you? Would you have me commit so great an injury to your friend as become his wife when my heart is indifferent to him ; nay, worse—”

“Stop !” cried William, almost breathless. “Leave me some respite. Don’t make me so thoroughly unhappy as to believe that Hargreave has truly interpreted your feelings.”

“What has he told you?”

“That you prefer that fellow, Fanshawe.”

“He is right. Jealousy has rendered him clearer-sighted than yourself,” said Margaret, resenting a little the bitterness testified by her brother towards Herbert.

“Then all is over for you in this world ! The being on whom you have wasted your young affections is utterly unworthy of your love !”

“Yet he was your chosen friend.”

“My college-companion — an agreeable acquaintance. But from the first, I scrupulously forbore to promote any intimacy between you. You knew what I thought

of him, Margaret ; a brilliant, heartless fellow—mica, not gold—a meteor, not a star.—Acquit me of ever having said a syllable to you in his favour.”

“ You did not forewarn me of my danger, if he found occasion to plead in his own.”

“ He *has* pleaded then?—He *has* endeavoured to engage your girlish heart ?”—

Margaret was silent with the silence that acquiesces.

“ He has perhaps even asked you for your hand ?”

Such silence was no longer possible. Margaret was too honest to mislead, even by inference.

“ No, brother,” said she, firmly. “ He has *not*. Had he done *that*, you would have been instantly apprised. But, situated as I appeared to be when he quitted England, how was *he*, dependent wholly on his father, to talk of marriage ?”

“ Am I to understand, then, that the tie between you consists in one of those fool-

ish flirtations which are the bane of English society?"

The pride of Margaret Mordaunt resented such an accusation.

"You are to understand," said she, "that, while we were inmates under the same roof, he neglected no occasion of seeking my society, of studying my character, opinions, sentiments, and made no secret of his preference. When I quitted Dursley, he brought his father to visit us at the Deanery; and nothing could be more marked than their attentions both to my poor father and myself."

"But what, then, prevented Sir Claude from proposing your union with his son?"

"My father and he had not met before for thirty years. Sir Claude was on the eve of a visit to the continent. Probably he was desirous of putting the stability of his son's attachment to the proof, ere he engaged him for life."

“Plausibly argued, Margaret; as we always argue in our own favour. But the deceptions we practise on ourselves are always fatal. Believe me, then, and you have ample means of verifying my assertion; just such as has been his conduct towards yourself, was it to Emma Hargreave before he made your acquaintance. *Her* sentiments and opinions were examined, *her* affections were besieged, *her* relations were propitiated; and when she believed him on the point of offering his hand, she found him at the feet of another! Such are his habits. Such is his notion of equity and honour towards your sex. Such, in fact, are the principles inculcated by his precious father.”

Margaret listened, but no longer with indignation. Her brother's accusations were too serious to be the result of mere prejudice.

“Dick Hargreave would have resented his conduct towards his sister,” continued

William, "but that he saw her feelings were unharmed, as she has proved by her present engagement. He had often prophesied, indeed, both to Emma and Julia, that some such throw-over would be the result of their giddy flirtations."

"In that case, admit that Mr. Fanshawe is justified," rejoined Margaret, calmly. "If he perceived that Emma's conduct was trivial or giddy, was it not natural he should retreat from what you justly call a mere flirtation?"

"Well then! Let us suppose him in that instance justified. What can you urge in his defence for having abandoned *you*, after, as you own, endeavouring to gain your affections?"

"What proof have you that he has abandoned me? He promised to return to R—— in January. My father's death intervened; and had we been engaged, Mr. Fanshawe would have been entitled to appear among us. As things stood, it would have

been indecent—it would have been impossible !”

“Impossible to come to the Deanery—granted. But why impossible to return to England?—Why impossible to be in London?—Why impossible to address to me, his friend, a letter of inquiry and condolence? Margaret, Margaret !—I see through Herbert Fanshawe as through crystal.”—

“Still, you have no right to assert that—that I am forgotten,”—faltered Margaret, overcome at once by her womanly feelings and the vehemence of her brother.

“None, certainly, that you are forgotten. But if any strong feeling of regard or affection influenced Herbert Fanshawe’s conduct, would he have started for Rome the moment he heard of my father’s death?”

“For Rome?—He is still at Paris with his father,” faltered Margaret, half interrogatively.

“He left him there, three weeks ago, to

proceed with young Fitzmorton to the East. Lady Fitzmorton, who was here yesterday, mentioned that the travellers had arrived at Rome."

Margaret said not a word. Her hopes were gone. Her heart was sinking. In all the confidingness of first love, she had been sustained throughout her afflictions by the hope of seeing Herbert again. And he was at a thousand miles distance!—He was actually on the road to the East!—

"There can be no error in Lady Fitzmorton's information," continued William,—judging wisely that the worst had better be imparted at once. "For before Fanshawe quitted Paris, he wrote to Dick Hargreave a letter which I have seen—ay, Margaret, actually *seen*—begging him to execute a commission in London about the sale of a park hack, for which he should have no further use; his father having settled that he was to remain abroad for the next two years."

“Abroad for two years!” repeated Margaret, in an absent manner.

“And to this commission, he added in an easy picktooth style,” continued William, again working himself into a rage, ‘So poor Mordaunt has, by a double-barrelled shot, lost his father and his law-suit! I am truly sorry for the Dean, who was a gentlemanly old soul, of a school now nearly extinct. I fear he has left little behind him, besides regrets. Old Mildenhall must do something handsome for Willy. *Noblesse oblige.*’ These were, as nearly as possible, his words.”

He paused for want of breath; not with any hope of a reply. Margaret sat speechless and motionless. Even when he approached and took her hand, she remained insensible to his endearments. After a silence of some minutes, she entreated to be left to herself.

“If you love me, Willy,” said she, “let me wrestle with this trial calmly and alone.

I am stronger than you suppose. It is a sad shock. But I must meet it as best I may. To-morrow, dearest brother, I shall be prepared to talk of it again."

CHAPTER IV.

Comme un arbre élevé dans une caisse étroite,
Conserve sa raideur en sortant de sa boîte,
Je n'ai pas retrouvé cet heureux don,
Du doux épanchement, et du tendre abandon.
Ma langue est demeuré aux doux propos rétive ;
Et, vivant malgré moi, toujours sur le qui vive,
J'ai désaccoutumé tous les élans du cœur.

EMILE AUGIER.

FRIENDS are proverbially injudicious. A lover is seldom less rash ; and Richard Hargreave formed no exception to the rule. It has been shown how, while Margaret remained happy and prosperous, admired

triumphant, he was able to control his affections. But now that, on his return home, he found her the object of a contemptuous charity on the part of his family, by whom, in other times, she had been exalted into a divinity, he could no longer repress his desire to assure her that he had long been her passionate admirer, and would fain devote himself to her happiness for the remainder of her days.

He had promised William Mordaunt, indeed, to take no hasty step. William was to feel his way, and Dick to be patient. But this was exacting too much; for when was true love ever over-patient! Besides, on reconsidering the matter, Dick Hargreave decided that a brother is by no means the surest interpreter of a woman's feelings.

Still, he might have perhaps fulfilled his promise of waiting a few days ere he ascertained whether he was to be happy or miserable for life, had not ill-fortune conveyed William Mordaunt the following day to

R——, and brought Barty Tomlinson to Dursley Park, on his way into Wales; to celebrate, with twenty thousand others, the nuptials of the heir of one of those moss and lichen-grown Welsh houses, whose family leek is rooted in soil antediluvian. As it suited Barty to spend a few days with the Hargreaves on his road,—Sir Thomas's dry champagne and incomparable Château Margaux being nearly as racy as the anecdotes of Lady Hargreave's parsimonious vulgarity, which he was in the habit of gathering to relieve guard with the Malapropisms of the American ministress, and other memorabilia of his intimate friends, at the dinner-tables of the London season,—he inaugurated himself in the house by talking throughout dinner *at* his hosts; chaunting the descent of the ancient family towards whom he was travelling, as ‘none of your people of yesterday, but descended from Ednyfed-up-Llewelyn, son of Madoc Crwm, Lord of Cryddyn, when Leofric reigned in

Mercia ;' and for the gratification of Sir Hurst Clitheroe, alluding mysteriously to the rise and fall of railway princes, and the pragmatality of fossil Cupids.

A sharp retort from the bridegroom elect—who, having understood that Barty Tomlinson was a clever adventurer, whose fortune consisted in brass rather than silver or gold, despised him with the full force of his ten thousand a year,—startled him into silence. But Barty Tomlinson was one of those who think it necessary to come out strong after a rebuff; and he accordingly made his next attack upon the absent friends of all parties.

“I saw a good deal of the Fanshawes at Paris,” said he. “Sir Claude was trading, as usual, upon his red riband; which he sported on all occasions, from an ambassador’s ball to a *diner fin* at the Trois Frères. On the strength of it, the old fellow contrives to get passed from embassy to embassy in *forma pauperis*; and I believe when he

don't manage to dine with one or other of the excellencies, broken truffles and heeltaps of Burgundy are sent him, by our own, by way of out-door relief."

"Sir Claude Fanshawe is a person whom every man is glad to see at his table," said Sir Thomas, reprehensively, under cover of his son-in-law's support; "both as a man of high standing in the political world, and of extensive information."

"With respect to his standing," replied Tomlinson, unabashed, "I believe he never stood higher than on the heights of Hillsburgh, near New Orleans, where he went with one of Dollond's telescopes to study the fortunes of war. As to intelligence, a plausible fellow who draws largely upon his own imagination, is not likely to find 'no effects' returned upon his cheque."

"Was Mr. Fanshawe staying with his father?" inquired Julia Hargreave, beside whom Barty Tomlinson was seated.

"Yes! *Le beau Herbert* was a partner in the

concern—and a sadly tottering one it seemed. Herbert, I find, has been fortune-hunting in England, where he met with several heavy falls. I was told, from pretty good authority, (a prating English banker who has enough to do at Paris in patching up the tattered affairs of his country people,) that he was too hard up to return to England at present. If that gawky boy, Fitzmorton, had not luckily arrived at the ‘Bristol,’ in want of a bear-leader and invited Fanshawe, as a pleasant exchange for his tutor, the Lovelace *par excellence* might have been forced to marry some Nabob’s widow, or some railway princess.”

“We understood that Mr. Fanshawe was on his way to Constantinople?” said Lady Hargreave, gravely.

“To the Ionian Islands first, I believe. Fitzmorton is making his grand tour; and wishes to taste Maraschino and Rosolio at the fountain head. All I know is, that Herbert was in an immense hurry to be off,

Herbert has been flying kites, both in love and money. Bills and love-letters are out against him to any amount. He seemed horribly afraid of being arrested, either by a writ or a special license."

"Did he *tell* you so?" inquired Dick Hargreave, who seldom addressed Barty Tomlinson on any subject.

"If he *had*, I should not have believed him. If he *had*, I should certainly not feel at liberty to repeat it. No !—like little Isaac in the play, he had a friend in the city—(a certain fair Mademoiselle Eglantine—the Dalilah of all our great British Sampsons,) who extracted the secret from him, and then, of course, made it public."

Sir Thomas intimated by a nod to his respectable mate, that the conversation was taking a turn which rendered it desirable that candles should be lighted in the drawing-room ; and away sailed the most submissive of wives, followed by her well-drilled daughters.

The flow of Barty Tomlinson's malignations was not checked by their departure; for William Mordaunt being absent, (suddenly summoned to R—— for an interview with the new Dean), there was no restriction upon his hints that the Ariadne from whom Fanshawe was flying to Constantinople, was no other than the Dean's daughter!

Furious at hearing the name of the woman he loved thus opprobriously dealt with, Dick Hargreave, after a few conclusive words to the astonished gossip-monger, retired, on quitting the dining-table, to his own room; where, his heart warmed by indignation, good claret, and good sentiments, he addressed a letter of proposal to Margaret Mordaunt, throwing his whole destiny into her hands. Of his consciousness of demerit in her eyes, he spoke in the humblest terms. But he promised her the entire devotion of his heart. He promised her a happy home. He promised her all the kindness which Margaret so sadly needed. William, he said, was

already by affection his brother. He implored her to make them brothers in earnest.

Grieved at receiving a declaration necessitating an ungracious act towards one in whom she recognized her brother's only friend, Margaret could not but congratulate herself that William was accidentally absent, so as to obviate all necessity of consulting him. It was fortunate, too, that the Hargreave girls were detained in the drawing-room by their duty towards more qualified guests. She was thus at liberty—not to consider her answer, for that demanded no deliberation,—but to seek the kindest terms in which a negative could be conveyed. Margaret's thankful nature was affluent in expressions of gratitude; and the letter was accordingly written and despatched in time to render sleepless the pillow of the man who received in it the death-blow of his earthly hopes.

The following day, she learned, without much surprise, that Mr. Hargreave had been

unexpectedly called from home. He was gone before the family was apprised of his intentions; and Margaret could not but feel that his departure was kind and considerate. Satisfied that he had confided nothing to his sisters, she met them without embarrassment. But it was not so, when late next evening, William's return was announced. Shrinking just then from his cross-questioning, Margaret sent to beg their interview might be postponed till morning. She was tired, and about to retire to bed. An answer came back in the shape of a large envelope, addressed in the handwriting of Mrs. Pleydell.

"I send you the woman's reply," wrote William. "I *send* it, because it would be hateful to me to communicate it by word of mouth. Alas! dear Margaret, how much have we to learn, and how little time must we waste ere we begin our lesson. Dismiss the past from your mind, my poor child, and look the future steadily in the face. '*Prenez votre position à deux mains*' is an

axiom which ought to be English. And if—but enough. You are tired and I desponding—so good-night.”

Thus prepared, Miss Mordaunt was less startled than her brother had been, by the cool refusal of Mrs. Pleydell to receive her as a guest.

“The Dean of R—— was on a visit to the Archdeacon’s,” she said, “and having much business on his hands, would probably find company an intrusion. Her offers of a home had, on the decease of the late Dean, been unceremoniously rejected. It would now be as inconvenient to her, as it apparently was to Lady Hargreave, to receive Miss Mordaunt under her roof.”

The last affront would have been spared by a woman less unwomanly than Mrs. Pleydell. By the whole letter, closing a long series of painful excitements, Margaret was so much overcome, that when her maid came for her last orders, she asked leave to sleep in the

dressing-room. She had not seen her young lady so poorly since the night of her father's death.

Her services were of course rejected ; and Margaret was left alone with the cares which had fallen as untimely on her young life, as a frost in June. How dreary the world appeared, as her thoughts wandered over its boundless space ! Where, where was she to turn for succour, or for hope ? William, her only friend, himself so young and so nearly destitute, must go forth to seek his fortune. Reginald and his wife, the unknown brother and cousin portrayed to her in such harsh colours, wrapt up probably in each other, gave no sign that they recognized her claims. The very heart within her seemed bruised, as she dwelt upon her forlorn condition. A year had not elapsed since she was driven from her childhood's home at Hephanger, to that happier fireside, of which the embers were cold. But now, where was she to find

shelter?—Her friends and acquaintances stood afar off.—The man she loved had deserted her :

A hopeless darkness, settled o'er her fate ;

courage to surmount which, and struggle with her difficulties, was hard to find at three o'clock on a cold March morning ; the fire extinguished, and the candles burning low.

The maid, Harston, a good girl, and attached to her mistress (the only person left, perhaps, who still saw in Margaret the “beautiful daughter of the popular Dean of R——,”) having left her indisposed the preceding night, saw fit, of course, to disturb her next morning with inquiries at the earliest possible hour ; and Margaret, whose eyes were only just closed in slumber, opened them heavily and sadly, and languidly raised her hand to receive two letters brought her by the post.

Having satisfied Harston that she was “better—much better—” though seldom in her young life had she been worse,—she opened one of the letters, chiefly to relieve herself from being stared at by her anxious servant. It was from a London shopkeeper, demanding immediate payment of his “bill delivered” for the dresses ordered by her indulgent father for the autumnal festivities at Dursley. Having already exhausted her little stock of pocket-money in clearing off similar demands, this bill, necessitating an appeal to poor William, appeared a heavy misfortune. She had not strength to open the other letter, which was addressed in a strange and somewhat uncouth handwriting. Nothing doubting that it was a second “small account,” she laid it mournfully aside.

Had she examined it more closely, she would have perceived that the seal bore a huge lozenge—peculiar, it would seem, to wealthy spinsters, desirous to convey to all

matrimonial pretenders their sentiments of defiance and disgust.

She was dressed, and ready for an interview with William, as soon as he presented himself to claim it ; who, when he saw her so pale and so unnerved, had not courage to communicate the annoyances he had experienced at R——. Could he utterly crush this broken reed ?—Was he to thrust her out barefoot upon the flinty path ?—He could not do it. He could only look at her, in silence, and wish that they had never been born.

Seated in deep reflection besides his sister's work-table, his eye was caught by the superscription of the unopened letter.

“What correspondent have you, darling,” said he, “who boasts such crabbed penmanship?”

“Open it, and tell me,” replied Margaret with a faint smile. “My letters just now are of so unwelcome a complexion, that I dread to break a seal.”

The first thing that issued from the thick envelope when her brother obeyed her injunction, was a bank post bill for £100.

“A singular correspondent truly, Margaret,” said he, greatly astonished. “Lady Milicent, I presume, moved by a fit of compunction. The writing is just what might have been expected from our cross-grained aunt. No ! by Jupiter ! It is none of Lady Milicent’s doing ;—it is dated Bardsel Tower ; from ‘Yours truly, Martha Hargreave.’ Aunt Martha !—But the letter is too long, and looks too confidential, my dear sister, for my perusal. I yield it to your hands.”

To decypher this strange missive was not difficult ; indited as it was in the large Italian hand seldom seen, except in old parish registers and family recipe-books of the last century. But the sentiments it expressed were likewise, alas ! of the last century—simple, downright, and kindly. Margaret was told how much her correspondent had liked and admired her, when she saw her surrounded

by adorers at Dursley Park ; her head unturned, and her heart unspoiled by adulation.

“ I am a plain-spoken woman, my dear young lady ; and trust it will need few words to make you understand what gratification you would bestow on me by giving me your company at a time when you have doubtless lost all desire for the worldly pleasures and distinctions, it is never in my power to confer. I am an old woman, a manufacturer's daughter ; living in the midst of my manufacturing kinsfolk. But you will find a warm welcome by my fireside, for as many months or years, as you choose to waste upon it. I say months, because *less* would be ill worth the trouble of so long a journey. And as the pleasure and profit of such a visit are all on my side, you must even let my old maid's hoard spare you its cost. The quicker you come, the longer you stay, the happier you will make me. But if you find you can't abide the old-fashioned ways of my house, when you say the word to leave me, I

promise I won't lay a detaining finger on you. I have never invited my nieces. They are too fond of the pomps and vanities of life, to content themselves with my home-made bread. But I can't help hoping, my dear, if you'll allow me so to call you, that *you* will not despise the plainness of your

“Affectionate well-wisher,

“MARTHA HARGREAVE.”

“And God bless her, say I!”—cried William, dashing away the tears which arose in his eyes, as, at Margaret's request he hastily ran through the lines. “God bless her, for a thoughtful kind old soul, an honour to her name and sex.”

It needs indeed to have been placed in a situation such as his, with an unprotected girl, beautiful, helpless, and all but penniless, looking to you for the aid you are unable to afford, to understand how deeply was appreciated the kindness of good aunt Martha.

“But who can have told her? How can

she have become so thoroughly aware of your friendless condition as this letter implies?" said William, gradually collecting himself. "Not the Hargreave girls. The utmost *they* would have written would be—Margaret Mordaunt is here, very much in the way, in her black gown, now that a gay wedding is on foot. Ah! I see through it all, Margaret, I see through it all! My friend Dick has been her informant. Dick and Aunt Martha thoroughly understand each other.—Just like one of his prompt, considerate arrangements!"

"Do you really think Mr. Hargreave has any share in this act of kindness?"—inquired Margaret thoughtfully.

"I could swear to it!"

"Then, alas! dear Willy, I must decline Mrs. Hargreave's generous offers."

"Margaret, Margaret! Are you so great a prude,—are you so great a fool,—are you capable of such paltry ingratitude!"—exclaimed her brother, with real indignation. "Here is

a woman who would act the part of a mother towards an orphan girl, without further claim upon her than the common one of fellow-creatureship ; and from some foolish, missish scruple or other, her kindness is rejected ! Margaret, my dear sister—my unhappy sister—what I once said to you, I say again, a thousand times more ungently : spurn not the protectors whom God is pleased to raise up for you in your adversity !”

Margaret’s tears were now flowing in torrents. Thus adjured, it became impossible to withhold from her brother what she had resolved to conceal—her rejection of the hand of his friend.

“ Tell me, therefore, dear William,” she concluded, “ can I, under such circumstances, intrude, with propriety, on the hospitality of one of Mr. Hargreave’s nearest and dearest relatives ?”

“ Undoubtedly. Most certainly. You have told me little, my poor child, which I did not strongly surmise. Hargreave’s sudden de-

parture from this place, without leaving a line of explanation for me, convinced me that something had gone wrong. But I see no reason why the good Samaritan so well disposed towards you, should be disappointed of your company, merely because she cannot receive you as the bride of her favourite nephew."

It was in vain that Margaret argued to the contrary. William was determined to be in the right: perhaps, with ulterior views; perhaps because better aware than his sister of the increasing calamities that awaited her. At length, she was forced to give in. It was agreed that, in the course of the morning, Lady Hargreave and her daughters should be apprised of the invitation and its acceptance. In two days, according to a thankful announcement to that effect which she despatched to Lancashire by the post, she was to be escorted by her brother to Bardsel Tower.

“And now, my child, that you are reasonable and compliant,” said William, after fondly embracing her, “I may venture to break to you some bad news, which I should, otherwise, have wanted courage to unfold. I have had a dreadful time of it at R——, dearest Margaret.”

“Don’t tell me that the people there are disrespectful to my father’s memory!” cried Miss Mordaunt, alarmed by his looks; “they, who so idolised him!”

“Idolatry is often a hollow service. In our case, it has proved so.—But it is not creeping things, like Mrs. Pleydell, of whom I complain.—It is not resentful tradespeople, kept out of their money.—It is—guess whom, my Margaret, guess whom,” he continued, with gathering emotion, such as terrified his already over-agitated sister. “It is Reginald—our brother—the future Lord Mildenhall—who has acted like a clod; nay, not like an honest clod, but like a

shabby attorney's clerk. Mathan, scrub as he is, would not have proved half so pettifogging."

"Is Reginald returned, then?" was Margaret's anxious inquiry.

"Not he. He has not the slightest notion of returning. Comfortably established in Italy, he pleads his wife's health as a pretext for leaving his father's memory to be torn to pieces."

"To whom, then, has he written?"

"To myself. I found a letter from him, full of plausible platitudes and common-place condolences, lying at the Deanery."

"And no enclosure for his sister?"

"None: scarcely mention of you in his letter. 'Mrs. Mordaunt and himself trust that you will resign yourself to an irremediable dispensation' — something of that decription. Of your prospects and forlorn situation, not a syllable."

Poor Margaret sat, the picture of despair.

"But this is not the worst, Meg. In this,

I see only what I have always seen and deplored in Reginald—a cold heart, and narrow mind. But yesterday, I heard of him what tempts me to place him, for the future, in the category of pitiful knaves.”

“Hush, hush, dear Willy!—Less loud, and less violent.—Remember that Reginald bears the name of our poor father.”

“I do remember it—curse him!—and would as gladly wrest *that* inheritance from him, as he would deprive *us* of ours.”

“I should have thought there was little enough to tempt him,” said Margaret, with a mournful smile.

“That is what constitutes the baseness of his conduct,” replied William, with growing emotion. “The man who would rob the widow of her mite, the ruffian who steals the poor man’s shorn lamb, is surely more despicable than he who plunders a caravan, or boards a galleon. Margaret! I have no words to express my indignation against Reginald. I disown him—I renounce

him!—Starving, I would not accept a morsel of bread at his hands.”

“Be moderate. — You are not talking like yourself!”

“No; for never in my life did I think and feel, as I have thought and felt this day. Will you believe it, Margaret, that—but I had better tell you my story from the beginning. I was summoned to R—— as you know, by a formal letter from the new Dean; the most formal of letters from the most formal of men. Under the best of circumstances, it would be painful enough to enter the poor old Deanery; the place I have so often reviled, and which has become as sacred in my eyes, as the Caaba to a Mussulman. I promise you, Meg, that when I rang at the bell, and was answered as usual by the old jackdaws, and the hollow echoes of the deserted court, I could have sat down on the kerb-stone and cried. It was like the voice of home speaking to me from the grave.”

He paused for a moment ; and Margaret was in no state to interrupt his broken sobs.

“ Well !—I scarcely know how—I found myself *tête-à-tête* in the library, with that ill-looking old dog of a Dean.”

“ William !”

“ I can't help it ! Any man I found sitting in my father's arm-chair, beside my father's writing table, would be an ill-looking dog to *me*. He showed such want of tact too—such want of sympathy in his mode of reception. However, don't fancy that I am going to abuse him, Margaret ; for he has won all my regard and respect, although my anger against another may provoke me to unseemly expressions.”

“ It was not from the Dean, however, that you received Reginald's letter ?”

“ No—his servants had already remitted me that ; and I reached his presence stunned by the surprise it caused me.—But the Dean soon brought me to myself.—The

Dean had far blacker news to communicate. He informed me that he had been required by a lawyer's letter (Wraxley, I suppose) to pay to the legal representative of Reginald Mordaunt, Esq., eldest son of the late Honourable Reginald Hammond Mordaunt, Dean of R—— and Rector of Mildenhall, the proceeds of the furniture and fixtures of the Deanery; he, the said Reginald Mordaunt, being sole representative of his father's estate."

"But I fancied — knowing nothing of business—that you expected and intended that Reginald, as the elder son, should administer to the will?"

"To the will, my dear child, but not to the estate:—Reginald disclaims the will—disputes the will! His lawyers have told him that his marriage settlements, by assigning the insurance money, sufficed to cancel the will. It may be so, or may not: the lawyers must decide. But if I had a guinea upon earth, though the last,

I would expend it in endeavouring to frustrate the shabbiness of Reginald."

"He has certainly no justification for a grasping act," said Margaret. "With *his* brilliant prospects, he might dispense with the few thousand pounds so vital to *us*."

"To *us*? You don't suppose it is *our* loss I am so bitterly lamenting? No, my dearest! But should Reginald's claims be sanctioned by the law of the land, no provision remains for the payment of my poor father's debts and funeral expenses. Wraxley and Lumm have already signified to certain tradespeople in R—— that, the late Dean having died intestate and insolvent, their demands will only be partially discharged."

"You must have been misinformed. You *must* have been misinformed. This is impossible. Reginald is a gentleman."

"He has even written confidentially to the Lazenbys that, as a part of his family will probably be thrown upon his hands, it behoves him to husband his resources; that the

whole of his property being in settlement, he must make the most of the small sum accruing to him by right of primogeniture, to assist him in maintaining his brother and sister."

"All this must have been suggested by my uncle!—"

"Reginald is old enough to think and act for himself. Well, we won't talk of him. The case is too flagrant. Let us return to the Dean—to Dean Barnes. He expressed himself on the subject exactly as could be wished; observed that Mr. Mordaunt was inexperienced, and had, perhaps, been ill-advised; feeling which, he had ventured to address him a strong letter of remonstrance. 'I told him,' said the Dean, 'that it was of course indifferent to myself to whom I paid what I am indebted. But that, by the double privilege of my age and cloth, I felt intitled to say that it was unbecoming a man of birth and education to profit by a legal technicality to deprive the poor of their due,

and his family of their independance; that his father's instructions being clear, it was his duty to carry them out. I even added, that it would cause a most pernicious public scandal, if he, the wealthy son of a dignitary of the Established Church, and on the eve of becoming a peer of the realm, should endeavour to dispossess his own flesh and blood, and defraud the industrious classes of their honest earnings.' ”

“ And what says Reginald in reply ? ” asked Margaret, faintly.

“ His answer cannot come to hand these ten days. It *must* be favourable. He cannot have the audacity to hold out. But that will not prevent our family name from having been dragged in the mire ; or my nature from having risen up in loathing against my own brother. Oh, Margaret ! this conduct of Reginald is the sorest trial of all ! What will every one think of us ? Who will understand or believe that we are not art and part in his dishonesty ? Already, I have had fierce

glances darted at me in R——. And then the Hargreaves. If Reginald should persist in his attorney-like views, who is to pay Richard Hargreave the sums he has advanced? Working, slaving, breaking my very heartstrings will not avail me. But let us say no more, just now," he continued, noticing the changes of his sister's complexion, and the despairing look which had taken possession of her beautiful face; "at least, till Reginald's answer arrives, there is hope of a less disgraceful termination."

Alas! alas—when people appeal for consolation to hope, it is a proof that they have little else remaining!—

CHAPTER V.

Sadly at night,
I sat me down beside a stranger's hearth,
And when the lingering hour of rest was come,
Moistened with tears my pillow.

SOUTHEY.

How cheering to the weary heart and eyes of poor Margaret proved the emerald lawn, the gay shrubberies, and bubbling trout-stream of Bardsel; when, some days after this explanation, a hearty welcome under the very porch from the kind-hearted Aunt Martha, she and her brother were invited to a quiet stroll round the premises, while their tea was preparing.

William, who was to return southwards by a night train from the neighbouring town, would willingly have passed the interval in farewell in-door talk with his sister. But he soon admitted that the old lady was right. The aspect of that quiet fertile nook, lighted up by the setting sun of a fine spring evening, brought pleasant thoughts into their hearts. It was consolatory to know in how cheerful a spot Margaret was to be established. The last days of April were at hand. The coppice skirting the lawn was as bright with violets, cowslips, orchises, while the white wild-cherry sprinkled its snow from overhead, as the American gardens with kalmias, azaleas, and rhododendrons. Compared with the penuriousness of the human kind, the prodigality of nature was encouraging; and hearts so young as those of Margaret and William Mordaunt, could scarcely think evil of a world thus lavishly endowed.

Aunt Martha, good soul, sent them forth alone; that her presence might impose no

restraint on their impressions. And after they had wandered about for half an hour—detected favourable points of scenery—visited the Shanghai fowls and Persian pigeons, and been sorely growled at by an Irish setter, half watch-dog, half pet—they were recalled to the tea-table, to admit that never, in so small a territory, had they seen so many charming views, or interesting objects.

Mrs. Hargreave, who, though excellent, was human, accepted greedily this homage to her belongings. She had her little vanities, like the rest of us; and, debarred from the tribute to the “tincture of a skin, love-darting eyes, and tresses like the morn,” conceded to others of her sex, it was excusable that she should gladly participate in the triumph of the crystal trout-stream and Shanghai fowls, which called her mistress. She was, in fact, as proud of her poultry-yard and dairy as Sir Thomas of his park and preserves; and the enthusiasm of her young visitors was incense to her nostrils.

The characteristic of Martha Hargreave was intense keenness of the perceptive powers ; as if gifted by nature at her birth, with an Ithuriel's spear. It is true she, nevertheless, remained blind or indulgent to the worldliness of her ambitious brother ; and had been long doubtful concerning the sincerity of her daughters. But consanguineous sympathies overmaster the brightest sagacity ; and she loved her family too dearly to consider their faults otherwise than as spots in the sun.

With casual acquaintances, it was otherwise ; and she had discerned at a glance the single-mindedness of Margaret Mordaunt, and the honesty of purpose of her brother. But for this, nothing would have induced her to seek their society. The shrewd spinster detested counterfeits. The smallest adulteration or imposition was insuperable. She liked her household bread to be of wholesome brown ; her fine linen was unbleached, her honey pure from the comb, her butter un-

complexioned with arnotto. Remote from cities, and holding little personal communication with even the neighbouring town, she assumed the privilege of dressing in defiance of the fashion of the day ; simply to defend herself against the summer's heat or winter's cold. The costume esteemed so monstrous by her nieces when she visited Dursley, appeared to *her* unsophisticated eyes an extraordinary sacrifice to the exigencies of prevailing fashion, due to the worldly position of Sir Thomas Hargreave, Bart., M.P. ; and on returning to her happy home, it was speedily laid aside for the thickest of shoes, the shortest of linsey woolsey petticoats, and the coarsest of straw bonnets.

In many points, however, Mrs. Hargreave's establishment exhibited marks of high refinement. Her pleasure-grounds were kept up at considerable cost by a first-rate gardener. Every new work of merit appeared on her reading-table ; and the walls of Bardsel Tower were graced with proofs of the first-

rate engravings of the day. Even her table, though plainly served, was remarkable for the excellence of its wines and viands; and her household furniture, though free from superfluous ornament, was all that modern invention has devised for the comfort and convenience of the human frame. Nothing ascetic about Aunt Martha, but her dress and *address*.

As they sat at tea in the pleasant room, whose lustrous light chintz hangings seemed to present bouquets of roses painted on snow-white marble, whose plate-glass window of a single pane opposed no obstacle to their view of the beautiful lawn with its clumps of early magnolias and gentian-bordered flower-beds, she related the history of her pleasant abode; its Saxon origin as Barde's Hael; and gradual diminishment from the ancient castle of feudal times, to the modern villa of a Spinning Jenny. During the last century, she said, the old county family to whose posterity it had descended, chose to

clear away the ruins, and construct with the materials a small mansion, as if to perpetuate an altar to the beauties of nature.

“By the time it was finished,” continued Aunt Martha, “the evergreens thriving, and the lawns smooth and grassy, a new generation succeeded, who loved London and parliament better than the running brooks of Bardsel; and I, who had spent my youth in the neighbourhood, much too poor and humble to regard the place with more than reverent admiration, found myself, when at last it fell into the market, rich enough to make it my own. A stroke of luck, eh! my dear Miss Mordaunt, that the place of all others I could have desired to live and die in, should have fallen within my scope? Luckier still that, having it and holding it, I love it better and better every day. I would not exchange Bardsel Tower for Dursley Park or Windsor Castle.”

“The site is indeed singularly agreeable,” said William.

“And you know not yet half its charms for an ungainly old woman who hates to be stared at,” quoth Aunt Martha. “Gentle or simple, I have not a neighbour—except my Bardsel children, yonder, the poor inhabitants of a hamlet on the estate; with whom, my dear young lady, you must condescend to become acquainted.”

Margaret desired no better. Her early life at Hephanger had familiarized her with Lady Bountiful-habits. Till she grew old enough to be an object of jealousy to Lady Milicent, she had been her grandmother's constant companion in her daily circuit of benevolence.

Though liable to be taxed with egotism for thus dwelling on her property and pursuits, Aunt Martha had no other object in view than to divert the tearful eyes of Margaret from the countenance of her brother, her last friend, to whom she was about to bid adieu; and right glad was the considerate spinster when the final

separation was over—the departing wheels heard in the distance—and Margaret left alone in her pleasant new apartments to sob herself to sleep.

“Poor girl,—poor child!” murmured Aunt Martha, as she betook herself to her own chamber. “How young to struggle with the cares of life!—No mother—no sister—scarcely a friend!—Poor girl!—poor unhappy child!”—

And she wisely concluded, ere she closed her own eyes for the night, that, purposing to be really and truly that poor child's friend, the kindest thing she could do was to endeavour to strengthen her mind, heart, and health, by judiciously exercising her faculties and occupying her time.

It is true that, at first, the good spinster a little exceeded her duty. Though warm with maternal tenderness, it requires to be a mother indeed to comprehend that there are moments in a young life when soothing is indispensable—when sorrow must be allowed

to have its way—when the wisest book ever written fails to instruct—the most lively, to amuse. And more than once, when compelled to follow Mrs. Hargreave through her schools, and knitting-classes, and almshouses, poor Margaret's eyes were too full of tears to discern the objects concerning which they were required to decide.

After a week or two, however, everything went easier. Miss Mordaunt's cheek recovered its natural hue—her mind its elasticity. She was able to interest herself in the novelty of surrounding scenes ; able to forget the “ungrateful injury” practised upon her by Herbert Fanshawe ; able to be thankful and affectionate to the kind friend who, on her own part, was growing hourly less fidgety and less officious. Aunt Martha even indulged her young friend, at times, in a full hour's reverie ; without tormenting her with a new pamphlet, or carrying her off to admire an addition to her wonderful collection of feathered fowl.

“It is an axiom of mine, my dear,” said the stanch old lady, “that the truest philosophy consists in extracting the greatest amount of pleasure from the sources within our reach. I daresay there are fifty thousand pleasanter things to be done in this world, than to drive in my pony-chaise to the banks of Malham water. But as the day happens to be delicious, and the pony at the door, let us go and find as much satisfaction as we can in the beauties of the scenery. To-morrow it may rain. So put by your work, dear young lady, and come and take a lesson from me in the classification of ferns and mosses, and seek for sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

As yet, Aunt Martha had never, since Margaret's arrival, named her nephew. But as she seldom spoke of even Julia and Emma, this reserve did not appear constrained.

She alluded one day, indeed, to the approaching marriage of Emma Hargreave, but in far from a kindly spirit.

“My niece has found a suitable match,” said she. “So much the better. Women brought up like Emma and Julia are unfitted for spinster life. As Lady Clitheroe, she will be a far happier woman than as Aunt Emma.”

“She is too generally admired to have remained long single,” observed Margaret.

“To be generally admired, my dear, is as bad as not to be admired at all. However, I have a notion that Sir Hurst will suit her better than any one of the young dangles I saw her courting and being courted by, at Dursley.”

“*Courting!* Dearest Mrs. Hargreave”

“My dear, I am an old-fashioned soul, and speak exactly as I think. In *my* time, and in the humble class to which we then belonged, and to which many of our kinsfolk still belong, such conduct as what my nieces call flirting, obtains a different name. At Bardsel, we should discharge a ‘flirting’

dairy-maid. To warrant such doings, you must first be a fine lady."

"I know nothing of London life or manners," observed Margaret, in an apologetic tone.

"No, God be thanked!" ejaculated, half audibly, Aunt Martha.

"And anything strange to me at Dursley, I always attributed to my own ignorance of the world. The manners of Emma and Julia, however, are exactly those of Lady Fitzmorton, Lady Delavile, and most others of their visitors."

"And more's the pity! What business have old Ebenezer Hargreave's granddaughters to compete with your peeresses of the realm?"—

"Emma and Julia are the daughters of Sir Thomas Hargreave, a member of parliament," argued Margaret, firmly.

"Ay; but 'tis not *that* they are proud of," interrupted Aunt Martha. "It is not of their father's position in the country; but of the

one they hope to purchase with their portion of his wealth. Well, well! we have all had our share in spoiling them, and must put up with the consequences. My experience with them, and of them, has, however, taught me something!"

"But you said you were pleased with Emma's choice?"

"Only because it is a choice to her heart's content. Sir Hurst Clitheroe suits my niece because she is aspiring and presumptuous. His position leaves her something to accomplish. She will spend her time in improving his under-fashioned if not old-fashioned house and household, and pushing him up in the world—(a favourite occupation of Emma's, born, I suppose, with a taste for climbing). To say the truth, I am afraid we are a restless family. We all love to be improving something or somebody. I have taken to bettering the breed of poultry, and growing monster carnations. My brother labours to connect himself with leading public men

and county families. Lady Clitheroe will trouble herself about the gilding of her ceilings, and the amount of Countesses on her visiting-list. The vast amount of nonsense I have heard her talk about it, when she did not fancy me listening, convinces me that so pains-taking a young lady will be precisely in her place, while endeavouring to polish Sir Hurst into the semblance of a man of fashion."

"Marriage may inspire her with other and more serious views."

"Not a marriage with a Sir Hurst Clitheroe. That old gaby will not steady her. He does not carry ballast enough for two. Between ourselves, my dear Miss Margaret, I suspect that the restlessness I have described as the characteristic of the Hargreaves, is a distinctive sign of people who have risen out of their proper station, and not yet established a *status* on their new level."

Margaret made no answer. She was thinking of a model of good breeding and

fascination, in contrast to the mind and manners of Sir Hurst Clitheroe ; of whom, in any other point of view, she had promised herself to think no more. It is possible, therefore, that she failed to hear Mrs. Martha's concluding observation of " My nephew, at least, is exempt from the defect. Dick Hargreave is as composed and self-governed as the rest of us are strangely unquiet ; because he has not a grain of undue pretension or idle ambition."

Lucky for her nephew that Margaret was prevented all necessity for reply, by the entrance of one who though rejoiced to listen to any amount of eulogy pronounced upon " dear blessed Mr. Richard," was just then far more intent upon rousing her mistress's indignation against the assassin of her finest brood of Cochin-China chickens.

All arbitrary people, above all those who pride themselves on being thoroughly independent, are invariably governed by some greater despot than themselves. Aunt

Martha, so firm and self-reliant, had two masters—a venerable housekeeper, who had been the attendant of her babyhood, and still regarded her as little better than an infant, and the Irish setter already described. It followed of course that Mrs. Rawson and Nero lived on the worst possible terms. Perpetual warfare waged betwixt the favourites. Goody Rawson had of course the best of it, in the terrible power of bearing false witness against the foe. But Nero maintained, on the other hand, the advantage of reinstating himself in his mistress's favour after disgrace, by the fervour of his caresses and charm of his noble exterior.

Even at that moment, while old Rawson, attired in a fly cap and starched apron, strongly resembling those of Mrs. Raffald or Mrs. Glasse (a mythical Mrs. Harris, of the *cuisine* of the last century) as portrayed in the frontispiece to their cookery books, harangued her mistress touching the fate of the chickens, the mangled remains of

one of which she held upbraidingly in her hands, Nero retained his wonted dignity on the lawn,

In guisa di leone che si posa,

occasionally lifting his fine head with an air of supreme contempt towards his plebeian accuser.

“Let us at least be just, Rawson, to the poor animal,” said her mistress. “Remember that he was my nephew’s gift—his old college companion.”

“Yes, Miss Martha, ma’am; a companion which Sir Thomas know’d better nor to keep in his grand peark,” mumbled the old lady, with a strong Lancashire accent.

“Because he chased the deer, and the keepers would have shot him.”

“Pity as they didn’t, Miss Martha, ma’am, sooner than he should ravage and destroy as he’s encouraged to do at Bairdsel Tower.”

“But, after all, Rawson, as I was saying

when you interrupted me, even were it proved that Nero was the delinquent in this case, what would you have me do?—Shoot him?—Drown him?—Hang him?—Give him away?”—

“No, Miss Martha, ma’am; I don’t wish no offence to be offered to dear Mr. Richard.”

“Nor any injury, I hope, to Nero?”

“Nor no injury to the doog. But I want him toyed close, as a Christian’s hoose-doo ought to be. He didn’t ought to go ram-paging about after the pony chay, rooning into poor folks’ cottages, and joomping on their beds when you driv through the village; and not a man Jack a-daring to ope his lips or lift an airm agin him; but swearing and grumbling loud enoo in the ingle-nook o’ noights, all for that pleague of a doog.”

“The doog,” as Mrs. Rawson called him, at this moment stalked to the window, and placed his majestic front paws on the ledge, as if to plead his cause with his mistress.

But he might have spared his pains. He was her nephew's gift, and that was enough. Without a glance at either plaintiff or defendant, Aunt Martha calmly inquired of Mrs. Rawson what recent mischief Nero had perpetrated in the village.

"I desired a week ago that everybody might be indemnified who could prove an injury," said she. "What has occurred since?"

The discomfited old lady hitched her apron-strings, and was silent. The only crime to be cited was the slaughter of the Cochin-China chickens; and her mistress, after observing that stoats, weasels, and foxes were by no means rare in the Bardsel woods, recommended that the poultry-houses should be kept fast, and Nero remain loose.

The gratitude of the noble animal was displayed in a thousand joyous leaps, and eloquent bayings, when, in the course of the afternoon, Mrs. Hargreave led the way among the over-grown furze-bushes of

Bardsel gorse, sheeted with living gold, and emitting a delicious smell of apricots under the influence of the scorching sunshine. May was at hand; and a thousand wild flowers, which enamel the meads for a day, and are gone unnoted and unnamed, save by the botanist, vanishing like the unregistered thoughts of a poet's brain, bestrewed the ground as for the coming advent of a queen. Earth and sky vied in many-tinted beauty.

The young breath of the year stole pure and warm upon the cheek. An indistinct murmur was in the air, as of coming vegetation,—a whisper as of the growing leaves and upstarting ferns,—not overcome by, but enhancing, the trill of the nightingale, the gleeful carol of the lark, and, above all, that monotonous cry of the cuckoo, that “winged voice” ever welcome as the harbinger of spring.

Long debarred from country rambles, Margaret was cheered by the hopeful revival of nature, by the tender hues of green deep-

ened by every passing shower, by the snowy bloom of the orchards, by the gorgeous splendors of the flower-garden, by the exquisite fragrance borne in gushes on the breeze, by the brightness of the water-flags, and the silver stars of the river ranunculus, struggling against the stream. All was so full of life—so full of promise—that her heart ceased to be as lead within her bosom. When raised by intimate communion with nature a degree nearer to the footstool of its great Creator, mere worldly cares are for a time forgotten.

“ We ought to congratulate ourselves, Margaret,” said the old lady to whom some portion of her enthusiasm was apparent, “ that our fancy is undeadened by the artificial splendours of London life. Our standard of beauty is a pure one. Factitious light, factitious colours, have not wearied our eyes. My nieces (I do not blame them) cannot hear the nightingale without comparing it with some opera singer. Down,

Nero,—down, Sir!—what has the snake done to you, that you can't leave it quiet among the furze?—As to the 'breath of hawthorns,' I am certain they prefer a Bond Street perfumer's shop! Depend upon it, my dear young lady, those who fancy themselves elevated in the scale of creation by false refinement of taste, become in truth, approximated a degree nearer the clod of the valley, by the decay of many a finer perception."

Margaret replied by proposing a visit to the schools. Alas! with no good intent; but anxious only to occupy the attention of her companion. In such weather, in such scenery, she wanted to enjoy her reverie unmolested. There are moments too delicious for the young—happy or unhappy—to bear being preached to. Margaret was greatly relieved when her excellent friend took to examining samplers, and reproofing dog's-eared spelling-books. And when in turn they came to the alms-houses, established by

Aunt Martha, and inhaled the spring fragrance of the wallflowers in their little gardens, the true benevolence with which the arid spinster softened down in tone and thought to commune with those who, in mind and body, were helpless as children, she longed to sue for pardon to one who was thus creating a paradise for those whose life had been otherwise a burthen.

It was on her return from one of these expeditions, her thankful heart glowing with happy feelings, that Margaret found on the hall-table awaiting her, a letter with a foreign post mark. A memorable find—a memorable day—long afterwards, *years* afterwards, noted permanently in her calendar. After time had stilled her pulses and subdued her imagination, she could still have told what flowers were in bloom the day she read that letter—what fragrance of sweetbriars and bell-hyacinths was lingering in the air—what an exulting song of larks in the skies,—what a clamorous cry of crickets on the heath. It

became as the very birthday of her soul, when she first saw the name of Herbert Fanshawe, affectionately subscribed to a letter bearing her address.

It was dated Palermo. While she was revelling in the pallid sunshine of the north, *he* had reached the land of the sun,—the cradle of perpetual spring. The anemones on which *he* gazed were orange flowers ; and *his* furze bush was a shapely myrtle !—

“ I do not write to excuse myself, beloved Margaret,” wrote the accomplished man of sentiment ; “ but to claim your thanks for the self-denying courage which has kept me so long silent. Less regard for your happiness and my own honour, would have borne me at once to your feet. But I loved you, Margaret, too dearly, to risk the influence of such a meeting. We are both penniless. No present, no future, is before us. My father has assured me that if I marry, he will at once resign me to my fate ; and

without his aid, I am less, far less, than nothing. Notwithstanding all it has cost me, therefore, dearest Margaret, I have consulted your welfare, on the most conscientious motives, by absenting myself from England at a moment critical to your happiness. We can never be more to each other than at this moment ; and it would be more than a fault—it would be a crime—if I endeavoured to inspire you with a distaste for the happier destinies awaiting you. Farewell, therefore, my own dear, blessed Margaret. May every best gift of Providence be your portion. Forget me ! Be a happy wife—a happy mother. Henceforward, from this dreary moment, we must meet no more. Be just however, and generous to the memory and affection of

“ Your ever devoted,

“ HERBERT FANSHAW.”

“ Follow your own discretion in avowing this letter to William. I dare no longer

address him as my *friend*. But how conscientiously can I call myself *his*."

What was there in this specious production that caused Margaret's tears to flow, and her shattered nerves to thrill? Nothing but that the influence of first love is omnipotent. The voice of the charmer found instant way to her ears. Thenceforward, she regarded herself as the victim of circumstances, rather than of Herbert Fanshawe. Her dream was over. But, at least, Herbert had vindicated himself. At least, she had the consolation of sympathy. He who had destroyed her earthly happiness, was himself miserable. She was, in short, fifty times more at ease in her mind than before she received his plausible letter.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh! who would not welcome that moment re-
turning,

When passion first waked a new life through his
frame,

And his soul, like the wood that grows fragrant in
burning,

Gave forth all its sweets in Love's exquisite flame.

MOORE.

AND why tarried the wheels of Richard Hargreave's chariot, while Margaret was listening to the murmur of the bees by the banks of the babbling trout-stream, and teaching the poor of Bardsel to stuff their mattresses with dried beech-leaves, and her

own heart that necessity knows no law, and that alms, whether to the heart or pocket, must be thankfully received by the destitute?

Because his sister's gaudy wedding was in progress. Because his father's house in Berkeley Square was busy with preparations for the event, which was to introduce two pretenders the more into that throng of impostors, whose object between the cradle and the grave is to pass the flash notes of the Bank of Elegance, and palm off gilt for gold on people less wary than themselves.

Sir Thomas Hargreave insisted that his son should remain in town, to grace the first hymeneals celebrated in the dynasty he had founded. He was immensely proud of his son-in-law, and of the magnificent establishment in progress for the happy couple. By the grandeur of a man better established in life than himself, he might have been "overcrowded." But it was cakes and ale to him to see • the splendid furniture gilding for Sir Hurst Clitheroe's Brummagem palace in Tyburnia ;

and the ostentatious epergne exhibited at a silversmith's in the Strand; swarming with frosted Cupids and swans, like the magnetic playthings of a toy-shop,—the fine art, in short, of a property room.

Of these displays of bad taste, Richard found himself required to be a spectator. He loathed it all. He despised it all. But he felt that, because *he* had higher aspirations, he had no right to denounce the taste of his brother-in-law, or wound his sister's self-love.

He remained in town, accordingly, till the end of July, waiting for the solemnization which waited for the close of the session; listening patiently to the monstrous inventions wherewith the gossip of the clubs overlays passing events; and scarcely wondering at the exaggerations with which the tongue of rumour imparts consequence to every household wherein a wedding or funeral is in progress.

"Is this true, my dear Hargreave," inquired Tomlinson, when they met one

morning at the Carlton, "this story of a Norwegian railway, in which your brother-in-law Sir Hurst has, within the last ten days, realized eighty thousand pounds?"

"I am no capitalist. Sir Hurst does not confide his speculations to *me*," replied Hargreave, drily.

"He's a wonderful man, however, in his way," replied Tomlinson, taking up his cudgels because no one attacked him. "When I was a boy, strawberry leaves were your only wear.—Now a-days, dukes are at a discount; and railway-kings have superseded them. The throne is at present occupied, I am told, by Sir Hurst Clitheroe."

"Not being his chancellor of the exchequer, I cannot pretend to enlighten you," said Hargreave, coldly. "But when I hear a man announced as a millionaire, I always conclude him to be on the eve of bankruptcy."

The tale was true, however: though related by Barty Tomlinson. Sir Hurst Clitheroe

had added some thousands per annum to his income; and was all the more valued by his future father-in-law, who affixed twice the value upon money acquired by enterprise, he would have done on an inherited income.—In his estimation, money-making implied genius; and the man who had created tens of thousands by a stroke of the pen, might in time create millions. He almost respected the reasonableness of mind which had caused his daughter to prefer to a set of penniless coxcombs (the Herbert Fanshawes and William Mordaunts introduced at Dursley by her brother,) the well-wigged knight who could endow her with houses and lands, and a steward's-room full of upper servants all more gentlemanly than himself.

Julia, too, if not actually engaged, was on the eve of an engagement, highly flattering to her family. It had been noticed throughout the season that all her foolish flirtations were laid aside; that, on pretence

of not caring to go to balls without her sister, she abstained from every gay assembly. Her passion for music transferred itself from the Opera House to Exeter Hall. Instead of shopping away her time, she attended lectures and Oriental Dioramas. Every sort of rational recreation that ever cast its shadow over the human mind, found Julia Hargreave demure and sober-suited, listening with the enthusiastic attention of a martyr.

Dick Hargreave, prepared for any extent of flightiness on the part of his sisters, was apprehensive that she meditated conversion to the Romish Church ; or that she thought of becoming a Sister of Mercy.—But a hint from that universal dragoman, Barty Tomlinson, soon interpreted the mystery. It was delightful indeed to have something disagreeable to communicate to a man who held him at arms' length, like Dick Hargreave. For Tomlinson, like the ant which introduces itself within the shell of the cockchaffer, and abides there till it has eaten

away the breast of the insect, was never happier than when torturing some struggling victim, in the heart of whose family he had contrived to become a fixed nuisance.

“Who would have guessed, my dear Hargreave,” said he, “that the heterogenous dinner party at the Gwendover Horribows, where I met Sir Thomas and Lady Hargreave last April, would fructify and bring forth such wondrous fruit !”—

“I don’t understand you. Who, in the first place, are the Wendover Horribows ?”

“Gwendover, not Wendover. Fifth-rate people, who are buying themselves into third-rate society, by giving first-rate dinners.”

“And are *you* one of the third-rate persons who condescend to eat them ?”

“Naturally, when I meet at their table, friends I esteem so highly as Sir Thomas and Lady Hargreave ! In general, their menagerie in the Regent’s Park includes a couple of dozen newly caught *feræ naturæ*,

no two of which ever met before—a sure criterion of bad company. At the dinner to which I allude, there shone several stars of the thousandth magnitude; among them the man who has been so happy as to captivate your fair sister.”

They were walking down the Birdcage Walk, while this conversation was going on; and, involuntarily, Dick Hargreave stopped short, and took the cigar from his mouth.

“Captivate my sister?”

“You don’t pretend to say that you have not seen it? Well, well! I take your blindness, like magnetic currents, upon trust. You are grown as absent as a philosopher, my dear Dick. You hear and see nothing. I should not wonder if you were yourself head over ears in love.”

Richard walked hastily on. But Barty Tomlinson quickened his step, and continued:

“The Bishop of Rosstrevor sat next your sister at dinner that day, and for *him* was

remarkably pleasant. He said three words in the first course ; and nearly a whole sentence after the third round of champagne."

"Perhaps you sat near him. You do not often give a man a chance."

"No, I sat opposite ; and admired how rapidly Miss Hargreave was sobered by the solemn vicinity of the silk apron. If she knew as much of Lord Arthur's story as I do, she would not have judged it necessary to take him quite so gravely."

"And what *is* his story, which I see you are dying to tell."

"I must tell it then between this and Storey's gate ; for I have business at the Emigration office. In one word, the Bishop, Lord Arthur O'Brennan, is the younger brother of an Irish marquis (a bran-new Irish marquis, *bien entendu*, ennobled within the century—and where the family was picked up to be ennobled, St. Patrick only knows). They were forced to buy an estate, to borrow its name for their title ; and where they

found the money to make the purchase, again, St. Patrick only knows. It was not a bad spec, I conclude ; for no sooner was the grandfather made a peer, than they contrived to make their coronet an Open Sesame to other preferment. It ended, however, in Lord Castle-Glynnon's leaving half a dozen Lord Johns and Lord Thomases, as tatterdemalion a set as even Ireland has the honour to know. Lord Arthur, the youngest, tried in succession the navy and army, before he presumed upon the Church ; and, having ruined himself in his two former professions by saucy answers or stupid answers to his superior officers, he was recommended by some sapient friend to try taciturnity ; on which he has traded with admirable success ever since. It is now some twelve or fifteen years since he was japanned, and became the incumbent of a family living ; and, thanks to having held his tongue, and his brother the marquis having spoken in his place, he has lately achieved a mitre. The next thing to obtain, is a wife ; though how

he is to accomplish *that* without breaking silence, I can't exactly understand. I presume he proposed to your sister by word of letter?"—

"I have no reason to believe he has proposed to my sister at all. The Bishop of Rosstrevor dined once or twice at my father's this season. So did *you*, Tomlinson. But I don't suppose *you* ate your mutton with matrimonial intentions?"—

This was said with malice prepense; for Barty had vainly attempted, aforesaid, to make himself agreeable to both sisters. The hint sufficed to hurry him off towards Park Street, the moment they reached Storey's Gate.

But his raillery had served to open the eyes of his companion to facts of which he had been unobservant. That his sisters would form alliances calculated to enrich him with brothers, he had long ceased to hope. Between himself and them, there was no sympathy beyond that of kindred birth; and he had a kinder and truer friend in Elinor

Maitland, his old tutor's daughter, than in either Julia or Emma. Still, though forced by circumstances to renounce the expectation he had once cherished of having William Mordaunt for a brother-in-law, it was too hard to be afflicted with such additions to the fireside circle at Dursley, as the pompous Sir Hurst Clitheroe and a dumb Bishop.

In the sequel, Barty Tomlinson proved to be right. He generally contrived to know people's family affairs sooner than they knew them themselves. And before the settlements of Emma were signed, the marriage of Julia was declared.

The Clitheroe wedding was as sumptuous as ever fell to the florid pen of the 'Morning Post' to describe, or of an overflowing purse to glorify. The bridesmaids were selected by Miss Hargreave from the most highly-qualified young ladies of her acquaintance; a dozen of whom, uniformly arrayed, accompanied her to the altar, like a flashy charity school, clothed by Cinderella's godmother.

The Bishop of Rosstrevor, whose tongue was loosed for the occasion and produced a brogue fearful to listen to, officiated on the occasion, "assisted by the rector of the parish;" and the wedding breakfast, which had kept several French cooks sleepless throughout the previous week, gave rise to many healths, and nearly as many blundering speeches, as ever were heard—out of Parliament. It was a hard trial for the dumb Bishop. He had to propose the health of his future father-in-law; and, for that day only permitted to up and speak, was required to restrict his Hibernian eloquence within as many sentences as he possessed senses. It is true, he contrived to make them very long, very complex, and utterly unintelligible; but the 'Morning Post' passed off the flagitious attempt glibly, under the generic name of "a neat and appropriate speech."

Unfortunately, one of the five sentences addressed itself to the heir apparent of the family; expressing a conviction that Richard

Hargreave would "shorrtly ally himself with some fameely, of which all the sons were brrave, and all the darrters virrtuous." And Sir Thomas, who was chiefly desirous that in the family of his future daughter-in-law, all the daughters might be ladyships and every son a Crœsus, began to think, with Admiral Quarterdeck, K.C.B., and General Rattan, G.C.B., that the Right Reverend Lord Arthur had far better have been mute.

A happy relief was it to Dick Hargreave, before the fumes of champagne had subsided in his father's magnificent banqueting-room, in Berkeley Square, or the fragrance of the orange-flowers evaporated, or the artistic structure of the wedding-cake ceded to the carving-knife of Gunter, to escape from the floating streamers of Brussels lace and rustling skirts of moire antique; and drive as fast as his thorough-bred bay could carry him towards Euston Square; to embark in that forlorn hope of lovers and the General Post Office, the Great Northern express train,

and dash down, through dewy meadows and musky hay-fields, gardens teeming with roses and heaths gritty with dust, to that cool and quiet retreat, where alas! of the two ladies that awaited him, the one who waited impatiently was not the youngest.

It was not till he reached the station, some two miles from Bardsel, that he began to question the prudence of his journey. What right had he to break in upon Margaret's happy life? What right to embitter the home his providence had secured her? He had been assured by William that his sister's letters breathed the most perfect contentment. What if he were about to transform her "days woven of silk and gold," into their former gloomy tissue?—

At such a surmise, he was half inclined to step into the next train, and rush back to Dursley, or Oak Hill, or Brighton, or Paris, or—no matter where. And yet to be so near to Margaret, and not refresh

his eyes by the sight of her heavenly face, and his ears by the sound of her soothing voice, after the clamour of London and all the hateful discords of artificial life, which, for months past, had been jarring upon his senses, was a sacrifice beyond his strength. Poor feeble lover, tossed hither and thither on the sea of an absorbing passion!—Who is to pilot, what compass is to govern, thy vague and vacillating course!—

For William Mordaunt, meanwhile, those three sweet summer months had been as dreary as November. For *him*, summer had been a name; saving for a few glimpses of blue sky as he hurried from his mean lodgings to Gray's Inn, or the scent of the hay-fields, as he dashed in a night-train from London to R——, or from R—— again to London.

Convinced or shamed by the manly remonstrances of Dean Barnes, or more likely, apprised by Wraxley of the doubtful issue of a suit-at-law—easily exemplified by the

recent mischance of his brother and sister touching Lady Bournemouth's inheritance, Reginald had relinquished his claim, and authorized his brother to undertake the administration of his meagre paternal estate. And this favour conceded, the duty undertaken necessarily involved the inexperienced young man in a vortex of law and legalities : as pleasant a state of existence as to be stranded in a central railway-station, in which the transverse trains are whizzing and shrieking around you, amid a wild interchange of signals and reprimands, comprehensible only by men in glazed hats with mystic letters and numerals on their collars : severest order and routine bearing all the appearance of confusion worse confounded.

To William, accustomed to the ease of a life of pleasure, this was a heavy penance. But henceforward, he had to grapple with realities. And, as became him, whenever he felt disposed to cut through the tangled web of cares in which he was enveloped—

may, God forgive him!—in moments when he had been goaded by whips and scorns more than human patience could endure, to rush down to the fetid river which has supplied a Lethe for so many miseries, and find shelter from the insults so wantonly lavished by men with money in their pockets, upon men whose pockets are bare,—it sufficed to think of Margaret, to restore him to a better frame of mind. She was his charge, his idol. He named her in his prayers, as Goevayl in Southey's verse :

Sweet sister mine, my own dear mother's child,

and regarding his responsibility towards her, as the dearest and holiest of duties, it served to restring his nerves, and stimulate his failing resolution. He went zealously to work upon his dusty papers (how carelessly kept by the indolent Dean) to search for receipts, probably long destroyed, notices neglected, letters unanswered—by which to

diminish the mass of claims daily rising up around him, to extinguish that slender patrimony which was to supply a maintenance to his sister. At present, the winding up of the estate seemed almost hopeless. At Mildenhall, as at R——, there were dilapidations to be accounted for; and though the latter were reduced to a matter of form by the liberality of Dean Barnes, the agents of Lord Mildenhall were as rigid as if the Dean and the Viscount came not of a common parent. While perusing one of the missives of Messrs. Wraxley and Lumm on this humiliating subject, William, suddenly burst into an exclamation, that the law of primogeniture seemed destined to perpetuate on earth the fate of Cain and Abel; seeing that, from century to century the elder-born sacrifices his brother.

After devoting weeks and months to despatch of undespachable business, William began to perceive that even if the still pending litigations terminated in his favour,

the small pittance to be derived from the residue of the estate would scarcely secure a provision for a single person.

“And that person must be Margaret,” was his instant conclusion. “Should Reginald extend his aid to her, (which he has never talked of doing,) she shall not be utterly dependent on his churlish charity. It is I who must suffer: it is I who must labour: and work I will, as never man worked before. Even if my scruples against taking orders did not exist—even if my uncle could be moved to give me one of his worst livings—my confounded follies at Oxford have rendered my return impossible. No chance of a degree, no chance of ordination. As to the law, by dint of miraculous industry, I might work my way to a maintenance. But in the interim, who is⁹ to provide me food and raiment? A literary career is supposed to supply at least bread and water; which I might surely compass, since such asses as Radelyffe and Lord

Macgibbon coin thousands with their patent pen. But then, *they* are in no want of money, which makes a wonderful difference, I am told, in a bookseller's appraisalment ! Better submit at once to the degradation of soliciting my father's few friends for their interest with Government, to procure me some humble post. Not colonial, for I must not lose sight of my darling sister. But some clerkship at home ; such as great men in office fling to the son of their butler or silversmith, and will not perhaps refuse to the son of the once popular Dean of R——."

But even this was less easily accomplished than the young man, who appreciated the advantage so haughtily, seemed to surmise. He was *not* the son of anybody's favourite butler or silversmith. He was *not* the nephew of some squire, with votes for a county. To apply to Lord Mildenhall for his interest, would have been like addressing himself to Shylock or a nether mill-stone ;

his lordship having been already pleased to signify, through his son-in-law, his regret that the conduct of Mr. William Mordaunt at college should have been such as to destroy his prospects in life, and render impossible all endeavours towards his future advancement. Nor was there so much as a friend of the family to testify to his morality of conduct, or habits of business, or become security for his integrity.

On one of his visits to London in the course of that harassing summer, William endeavoured to talk lightly of his prospects to Dick Hargreave ; though his jests were about as hollow as those of Anne Boleyn on the scaffold.

“ They don’t think me honest enough for a post-office clerk,” said he, “ or arithmetician enough for the Audit office. I believe they even doubt whether I possess sufficient grammar and clean shirts for any government clerkship :—I, fantastic blockhead, who once talked of the Foreign and Privy Council

offices, as beneath my station and abilities ! I must come down a peg in my notions, if I hope to earn the means of paying for a tough mutton chop in some ordinary, fifty times nastier than this same coffee-room at Hatchett's, at which, dear Dick, you are graciously pleased to turn up your nose."

"I don't turn up my nose ; I only say that if you would share my lodgings in Curzon Street, instead of making appointments with me here, our interviews might be far more confidential."

"And afford Lady Clitheroe and Lady Arthur O'Brennan an opportunity of admiring my plain unvarnished boots, still adorned with the ticket of the Lowther Arcade ?—No, no ! But, as I was saying, Dick, since even of appointments which my family would consider a disgrace to *them*, I am declared unworthy, nothing remains but to profit by my early discredit. I must even turn stud-groom, or drive a coach."

"Don't ask me to go security in *that* line,"

said Hargreave, as gravely as if he had supposed his friend in earnest.—“Please to remember how you over-blistered my bay mare at Oxford.—As to the ribbons, I was never overturned but once, and then, my dear Willy, *you* were driving.”

“Thanks!—A true friend!—Taking note of my backslidings, and writing them down in malice. Couldn’t you recommend me then as keeper, Dick, or odd-man to some Hampshire squire?”—

“You are pleased to dive so low,” rejoined Dick Hargreave, a little embarrassed, “that I know not whether I have met your views in some steps I have ventured to take on your account. If not, you must forgive me, Bill. I have acted for you as I would have done for a brother, or for myself.”

“Of that, I am certain.”

“I don’t know whether I ever spoke to you of my kinsman, Ebenezer Hargreave? Probably not; for it is the fashion in our family to keep our country cousins in the

shade. I should have been afraid of risking a fainting-fit to Emma or Julia, by talking of our relation, the cotton-spinner."

"You have talked of him hundreds of times ;—of his factory at Hargreen ;—of his honest-mindedness ; of—"

"Well ! so far so good ; for you will not be indebted to a perfect stranger."

"*Indebted ?*"

"My dear Bill, for God's sake don't draw yourself up to the full stretch of those couple of inches in which you have the advantage of me ; or I shall be afraid to proceed with my story."

William Mordaunt replied by taking quiet possession of an arm-chair.

"Well, this said Ebenezer," continued his friend, accepting the concession, "and his son, my cousin Ralph, are two of the finest fellows of my acquaintance : though I doubt whether Mrs. Brampton Brylls of Bryllholm Place would condescend to place them on her visiting list ; or Barty Tomlinson even

to sponge upon them. Old Ebenezer's influence in Lancashire, as the steady employer of two thousand hands, and the dauntless chairman of almost every local assembly, is so considerable, that he might be in Parliament any day he chose. Thank heaven, he is prudent enough not to swim out of his depth ; but contents himself with discharging the duty that lies nearest to him. He has consequently some interest with the member for his county ; whom he could oust from his seat by allowing himself to be put in nomination."

"But since Sir Thomas and your mother are so averse to mere mention of their Lancashire kinsfolk, how came you, and where came you, to be so intimate?"

"At Bardsel. Aunt Martha has never affected Dursley exclusivism. At *her* house assembles the whole clan and tribe of Hargreave ; queer fishes, some of them, I promise you ! With Ebenezer, however, I am (I may say so without boasting,) a first

favourite ; and luckily enough, the old fellow made his appearance in town, with a deputation, a fortnight ago ; just as I was mustering courage to write and ask him a favour."

Involuntarily, William Mordaunt made some uneasy twitches.

"It was somewhat of a risk to attack him," resumed Richard ; "for he returned as uncivil a 'no' to my father's over civil invitation to him to dine in Berkeley Square, as if he were in reality the Chartist—Socialist—Red Republican, and I know not what besides,—which my family are apt to describe him."

"Then why *did* you risk it."

"Nothing hazard, nothing have. I went to see him at his hotel ; was welcomed with open arms ; told him my story—that is *yours*—and received in return this promise to serve me, 'I've never asked nowt of ministers,' said he, 'howsobe they've many and manys the time had me oop to town for their committees and nonsense of one

koind or t'ooter. Our member's one o' 'em, cousin Dick ; and as he makes bould to kiount on me, so I shall make bould to kiount on him. For my own folks, my own kith and kin, I 'oudn't ha' asked for the value of a pin, Dick Hargreave. But this young friend o' yourn is o' their own kidney—of their 'race' as they call it ; and so as their bad system have been the means o' ruining on him, let them as wore out the kettle, tinker it, say I, ' "

William was once more out of his chair, and standing on the hearth, opposite his too communicative friend, in a state of high irritation.

"I was half afraid he would not have leisure to think more of my request," resumed Dick Hargreave ; " as he was to leave town the following day. But business-men are prompter in their movements, than such pick-tooth fellows as you and I. And, just as I was beginning to ask myself whether it might not be as well to write down to

Hargreen, and jog the old fellow's memory, (or enlist in our service my cousin Ralph, the best friend that ever breathed,) behold this morning's post brings a letter from Ebenezer ; inclosing one from the Treasury, (private and confidential, of course,) and as he observes in his accompanying note 'as full of butter as a Bath bun.' Here it is !" said he, taking a thick envelope from his pocket-book. " And if you can forgive my officiousness, let me hope that it will make you as happy as it has made myself."

The letter contained, as ministerial letters are apt to do, a bushel of chaff and a single grain of corn ; but it was a grain worth its weight in diamond dust. A post in one of the pleasantest and most gentlemanly of public-offices, including chambers at Somerset House, and a salary of two hundred and thirty pounds per annum, was placed at the disposal of that excellent friend and supporter of government, Mr. Ebenezer Hargreave ; on an understanding that the interesting *protégé*

for whom it was intended, was the son of the late Dean Mordaunt, and nephew to Viscount Mildenhall."

"I told you," wrote Cousin Ebenezer, by way of note explanatory to this portion of the ministerial missive, "that my application would be all the better attended to as regarding one of their own highflyers. A capital good joke, to my notion, that Ebenezer Hargreave of Hargreen, should be currying court favour for the blood-relation of a lord! More in your father's line of business—eh, Richard?—But as you told me that this ill-used young gentleman would most like object to Sir Thomas's interference in his affairs, I did not scruple to befriend him."

It was not without certain compunctions of wounded pride, though with the tenderest gratitude to his friend, that William Mordaunt made himself master of all these details. His lesson of humiliation was as yet learned but half. The patrician blood within him still, rebelled against plebeian

patronage. Still, it was something—it was *much*—to have been spared an appeal to the far more vulgar pomposity of Lord Mildenhall, or of Sir Thomas Hargreave, Bart., M.P., of Dursley Park.

“And what am I to say to the old fellow?” inquired Dick, a little anxiously—for the thankful but silent pressure of his hand once and again repeated by William Mor-daunt, conveyed no very exact intimation of his intentions.

“Can you ask me?” faltered William, in a hoarse voice. “What can a beggar reply to such an offer, but that he accepts, and is grateful. I must, however, come to an exact understanding on one point. Ascertain for me, that no use was made of my uncle’s name, as a lure or bribe to Government. I have no authority to use it; and if I had, would sooner sell matches at the corner of the street, than benefit by his influence.”

“Let old Ebenezer alone. The name of a lord would have burned his tongue, or

blunted his pen, if used in backing an application of *his*. He could not call you Smith or Thomson. In representing you as an educated gentleman — Eton, Oxford, and so forth,—it was *necessary* to add that you were a son of the late Dean Mordaunt.”

“ Still, for my satisfaction’s sake, dear Dick, *pray* let the point be clear.”

“ I will write, if you insist upon it,” said Dick Hargreave, “ though I had twenty times rather my letter to the old fellow contained only our thanks, and acceptance. Such a demurrer will seem anything but gracious.”

“ And why? It is a simple inquiry, demanding only a negative or affirmative.”

“ I am not afraid that my kinsman will grudge me a scrape of the pen. But he will be affronted. And to say the truth, Bill, I shall begin to fear for your progress in life, official or private, if you snatch up every stone on which you are about to set foot, in order to ascertain its formation.”

William was evidently annoyed. It was

seldom Dick Hargreave said so much ; and his friend concluded that he fancied his part as patron endowed him with the right to lecture. Dick perceived it in a moment.

“ In plain words, I can't afford to offend either Ebenezer or Ralph,” said he, shaking hands with him at parting. “ To Ralph, I have a host of obligations. Among others, the possession of a certain setter, which he gave me as a pup, when I was myself only a whelp ; and which now, I find from Aunt Martha, is the companion of your sister's rambles.”

CHAPTER VI.

Quel triste métier, de chanter les combats
Et les peines du cœur, à ceux qui n'en ont pas.

LE VAVASSEUR.

DURSLEY PARK enjoyed that year the unusual honour of receiving Sir Thomas and Lady Hargreave at the close of the London season; Oak Hill, and the 'Nautilus' schooner moored under its shrubberies, being the honeymoon appanage of the Clitheroes. The pine-tree bench which had witnessed the brotherly confidences of Dick and William, was now the retreat of far more practical persons; a bride and bridegroom whose talk

was of railway shares and foreign securities ; and whose billet-doux might have been interchanged by the electric telegraph with perfect propriety. Even before the altar, their pulses had not quickened by a throb.

Still graver, however, if possible, was the courtship now proceeding at Dursley. As if in revenge upon the girlish vanities which had profited her so little, Lady Hargreave's daughters had taken up their vocation of worldly wisdom as strenuously as converts embrace a new religion. Julia was now as serious, or as *she* called it, as rational, as Emma had become mercenary and calculating ; and there was already in the sisters the making of two as disagreeable women as ever deadened the cheerfulness of social life.

The wedding of the future Lady Arthur, was arranged on a still grander scale of magnificence than that of her sister. The vain-glorious family was ambitious of meeting the Irish Marquisate, on something of an equal footing ; and they consequently persua-

ded the Fitzmortons and Delaviles to grace the ceremony with their presence. These aristocratic pre-eminences, who predominated like Ossa and Pelion in the county, entertaining a system of signals between themselves, incomprehensible to the vulgar, had long agreed that, though it was impossible to know anything of the Hargreaves in London beyond an exchange of visiting cards, they were people to be noticed in the country: substantial clients in public subscriptions and private charities, whenever a flood or fire or epidemic, taxed the humanity of the county. Even if taken in the fact of dining with them, or giving them dinners, country neighbourhood is an admitted plea for condescension with the stiffest-backed of the "old nobility," sung by one of their caste, now wise enough to prefer reason to rhyme.

It was August, too—the November of country-house life;—when, as there is nothing to be killed in the fields, they lose their charm to eyes polite; and so the stately

inhabitants of Delavile Abbey and Morton Castle agreed to spend a gaudy day at Dursley Park. The Hargreaves, — whose dry champagne was unimpeachable, and who, when they wanted a little music, thought it worth while, with right regal or right parvenu magnificence, to secure Thalberg, Grisi, and Mario, — were people better worth knowing than such antediluvians as the Brampton Brylls, of Bryllholm Place, unable to contribute a cheecseparing, or a tune on the spinnet, to the entertainment of their neighbours.

“The Hargreaves are getting on amazingly,” was Lady Delavile’s observation to her lord, after perusing the letter announcing the approaching marriage of their daughter with the Bishop of Rosstrevor. “A younger son of the late Lord Castle-Glynnon, if I mistake not. An immense match for the granddaughter of a factory-man (something of that kind — was not Sir Thomas Hargreave’s father, my dear Lord Delavile?) But they

really deserve it. More civil, painstaking, obliging people I never met. And on the right side, too. Young Hargreave, I suppose, will come into Parliament at the next election—to say nothing of that rich railway son-in-law.—Three votes!—Yes, my dear Delavile, we had better go to this wedding. There is nothing stirring hereabouts just now. It will be a change to help us through the week; and there will not be a soul one knows to make a history of our being present.”

There *was* a guest, however, at Dursley Park, to make histories concerning both present and absent. Barty Tomlinson, the smell-feast, who had contrived to extort an invitation, whispered to Lady Fitzmorton, very few minutes after her arrival, “I am sure, dear Lady F., I know what brings you hither—though you *look* as if brought to the house in custody of the Black Rod. My friend Fitz has written to you from Pera, or Smyrna, to beg an account of the wedding

for the benefit of Herbert Fanshawe; who proposed last year, and was refused, in succession, by every female under the roof of Dursley—from the maiden aunt in linsey-woolsey, to the *dame de compagnie*, in brocade. Ha! here are the Delaviles, too, with their duodecimo postillions. *They* are come here only to see whether there is any chance of coaxing over the vote of the new member for R——. What a charming parliamentary agent spoiled, when Heaven made that woman a peeress! Good morning, Lady Delavile. Anything new in last night's 'Standard'?—I am told a Cabinet is called for Thursday next. Rather unusual at this season."

Lady Delavile, who entertained a sovereign disgust for the presumptuous little *pique-assiette*, contemplated him with the same air of wonder she might have surveyed a mite or aphid through a microscope, and made no sort of answer. But no sooner had she

swept on towards Lady Hargreave and her daughters, than he exclaimed in a half-aside tone to Lady Fitzmorton, (a timid woman, too shy to silence his impertinence,) “an excellent person, poor dear Lady Delavile. For whom, or what, is she in mourning? Her complexion, perhaps, which is decidedly gone. She consoles herself for the loss, by the pretension of becoming a *femme politique*; as if it followed that, because you are too old for a beauty, you are just old enough for a *bel-esprit*. I am afraid it is *nullus go-us*! Lady Delavile may have lost her molars, but she has not cut her wisdom-teeth.”

Unmitigated, even by the excellence of the wedding cheer, was the venom of the little chatterbox. After insulting every member of the Hargreave family by expressions of surprise at their having “got” Lady Fitzmorton and the Delaviles, and then, suddenly recollecting that it was August, and nothing going on, he hit upon a new raw—the

absence of the heir of Dursley.—“What was his friend Dick about, that he did not attend his sister’s wedding?—Most extraordinary! Dick expressly told him in Berkeley Square, in July, that they should meet at Dursley the following month. What could possibly have altered his intention?”

Every member of the family, though forewarned against his cross-questioning, was pumped out of some trifling hint of the information he wanted to obtain; till, by degrees, his notes and queries had elicited that there was a split in the family cabinet; and that Mr. Hargreave was absent without leave.

“I wonder my friend Dick had courage to absent himself from so grand a family festivity,” said he, to Mrs. Brampton Brylls, on the wedding morning, having decoyed her into the new conservatory, on pretence of showing her the *Victoria Regia* in flower.

“Courage? Cowardice you mean!” responded the congenial spirit of the embittered old lady. “Mr. Hargreave dares not

face his father and mother. He is staying in the North with the vulgar old aunt to whom Sir Thomas pays an annuity never to speak to them in public."

"Banished? For what crime?" rejoined Sir Benjamin Backbite. "Has Dick been flirting or playing?—Is he in love, or in debt?—Or has he seceded from the family politics or religion, which people do now-a-days, as unblushingly as they dye their hair," continued he, fixing an inquisitorial stare upon Mrs. Brampton Brylls' capillary parting, bearing manifest traces of Melacomia.

"He simply wants to marry the daughter of the Dean of R——, who died last year over head and ears in debt," she replied, tamed down as by the glance of a Van Amburgh.

"I recollect!—His bankruptcy made nearly as much noise in the country as that of the Prince de Guéménée, at Paris, before the first revolution; of which, they say, it laid the foundation stone."

“Well! Dean Mordaunt’s is beginning to revolutionise Dursley Park. Sir Thomas promoted the match with Miss Mordaunt with all his soul and with all his strength, till he found that she was a beggar. But the Dean unluckily died before he succeeded to his brother’s title and estate. As if a Mordaunt in rags, were not a match for the grand-daughter of a Manchester cotton-spinner!”

“Not much to choose between the cobwebs of a ruined house and the flue of a thriving factory, I admit,” retorted Barty, aspishly. “But what attitude has Dick taken in the family storm?—That of Ajax bullying the elements?”—

“I understand he is bent on following up his imprudent engagement to Miss Mordaunt. And if Lady Arthur O’Brennan should have a son, nothing would surprise me less than to find Sir Thomas disinherit *his*, and adopt his grandson.”

“Provided he took the glorious name of

Hargreave. Ha! ha! ha! New people, like eels, adhere to their native mud. But Dick could not marry without his father's assistance."

"The wealthy aunt, it seems, has undertaken a dowry for Miss Mordaunt; and among them, they have established her needy brother in business or an office, or something or other that gives him a coat to his back."

"God bless my soul! I had not heard a word of this! How fortunate are the Hargreaves, my dear Mrs. Brampton Brylls, in having at their gates so candid a biographer. Since Moore's Life of Sheridan, and Croker's Sketch of Hook, never was friend so impartially dealt with!"

The post of that day conveyed, of course, to the three or four great people, to whom it was the mission of Barty Tomlinson to purvey gossip, graphic sketches of the wedding of the R. R. Lord Arthur the Taciturn; as well as of Dick Hargreave, the millionaire,

sharing like St. Martin, his cloak with a beggar.

And from a train thus laid, what ramifications of scandal and mischief!

But was Richard Hargreave really so happy as to have incurred any risk of disinheritance? Alas! on his arrival at Bardsel Tower, a fortnight after William Mordaunt's acceptance of the place procured for him, he had been welcomed by Margaret with such friendly and sisterly ease as drove him to despair. He saw at once by her manner that he was adopted as William's benefactor, as the favourite nephew of her own benefactress; but that, as far as love was concerned, she would sooner have given her affections to Nero!

How he wished there had been the slightest awkwardness in her manner of receiving him! How he wished she had shrunk from sauntering with him in the coppice, or beside the stream which now ran crystal and weedless! She might have been

married for the last half-dozen years to the parson of the parish, for any fear she seemed to entertain of being again solicited to become his wife. Margaret evidently considered herself sheltered from importunate solicitation, under the safeguard of her great obligations.

Deep was his mortification! He had hoped that complete estrangement from the fickle object of her preference, and above all that the influence of his partial aunt, would have effected something in his favour. And so they had. But the state of feeling thus induced, was precisely the calm security so obnoxious to a lover.

When the first flurry of vexation was exhausted, he began to quarrel with himself rather than with Margaret; and rescinded his rash resolve of instant departure. To leave Bardsel when it was looking so beautiful—to quit Margaret when *she* was not only looking so beautiful, but speaking so kindly, would have been the captiousness of a child.

No ! he would remain and content himself with the cheerful flow of her conversation, the intelligence of her open countenance ; how different from the studied flippancy and artificial smiles of the patent angels which spread their gauzy wings in Belgravia !

“ I should be an idiot to refuse myself the pleasure of living under the same roof with her, because she does not choose to be called Mrs. Hargreave,” said he.

And when, a fortnight afterwards, Sir Thomas, on finding that Margaret and his son were inmates of Bardsel Tower, addressed him one of those arbitrary letters which render parental rule insupportable—commanding him to appear at Dursley Park on a certain day as if subpoenaed by the Court of Chancery,—Richard, who had always intended to be present at his sister's wedding, replied that it was not at present his intention to travel southwards.

More letters followed. But of what nature, it would be difficult to say. For

they were addressed by Sir Thomas to his sister Martha; who, when she thought proper, could be as close as one of Sir Hurst Clitheroe's deed-chests—*chef-d'œuvres* from the furnace of Chubb. Their effect was visible only in increased tenderness towards Margaret, and an evident determination to leave the young couple to themselves.

“My brother is going blind,” was the spinster's argument with herself. “My brother has had gold-dust thrown in his eyes, and no longer discerns black from white. To make his son settle down into a happy man and useful member of society, there wants only a gentle companionable wife, like Margaret Mordaunt. And, for my part, I would rather see the family heirless, than find my nephew degenerate into a make-believe man of fashion, married to a ladyship, and selling his conscience to ministers for a riband or a place.”

She refrained, therefore, from further communication with Dursley Park. “They

will be too busy with their bride-cake and favours to take heed of my silence," muttered she. "And if my nephew and Margaret choose to walk quietly to church some morning, without leave but not without license, I must stop the gap in my brother's temper with gold-leaf; and give shelter to the young couple till the storm blows over."

The more Dick Hargreave complained of Margaret's indifference, the more satisfied was Aunt Martha that the snows were gradually dissolving, and that, as on the Swiss mountains, flowers would suddenly appear underneath.

Not a little surprised, meanwhile, was Dick Hargreave to find the delicate elegant Margaret established as a first favourite with his rough cousin Ebenezer—a frequent guest at Bardsel. At first, he attributed this singular friendship to the fact asserted in Champfort's axiom, "*qu'on s'attache par ses bienfaits*;" the sister of William Mor-

daunt of Somerset House, being necessarily an object of interest to the Downing Street Deputationist. But he soon learned to ascribe it to the sympathy spontaneous between honest minds and feeling hearts.

The old cotton-spinner and Margaret liked each other at first sight, because "like loves like;"—albeit, as poor Hood sings—

There's far from coats of frieze
To silk and satin gowns.

But if as much pleased as surprised to find the lady of his love a frequent visitor at Hargreen Factory—curious to observe, fond to admire, and storing her mind with new experiences,—he would rather his cousin Ralph had been less strikingly handsome, and less remarkably agreeable. Ralph Hargreave was a fine specimen of the educated manufacturer; enlightened by foreign travel and acute observation. His father had sent him to the four quarters of the globe, in quest of information connected with, and

connections profitable to, their business ; and Ralph had brought home, in addition, as much useful knowledge as converted him into one of the pleasantest companions in the world. Ralph Hargreave was light in hand as a barb ; devoid equally of levity and pedantry. He not only knew most things, but when to keep them to himself.

His cousin Dick had long recognized his merits ; and one of the many sources of gratification connected with his visits to Bardsel, was good neighbourship with his manly, rational kinsman. Ralph was ten years his senior ; old enough to know his own superiority of mind, and too old to be anxious about parading it. But that Miss Mordaunt's visit to Aunt Martha had been embellished by such an addition to their society, was not reassuring. Ralph was far too good to look at, and to listen to, for his London-taught kinsman to feel satisfied at the extreme intimacy existing between the stalwart cotton-spinner and Nero ; as

though the man and beast were in habits of daily intercourse.

“As if Dean Mordaunt’s daughter would stoop to become Mrs. Hargreave of Hargreen!” muttered he, when, on a glowing First of September, he was returning with his dog and gun from the stubbles, after noticing the young couple sauntering together at a distance among the straggling thickets of the coppice. “Yet after all, one Hargreave is as good as another; and no one can say how many hundreds of thousands the old man has laid up for his son. Ebenezer’s peculiar opinions have kept his branch of the family from springing upwards; but when he is gone, Ralph will emerge from obscurity, and shine in the world.”

Ralph appeared to him, in short, a dangerous rival. There was between them much congeniality: the same honest nature, the same frank countenance. But Ralph was the upright, sturdy pine tree springing on the mountain side; and Richard the same

tree, planted on a cultivated lawn; pruned here and thinned out there, to afford vistas for the views of the proprietor; stunted and cankered therefore, compared with his cousin.

Conscious of inferiority, never was the shy suitor seen to less advantage than in Ralph Hargreave's presence. Ralph seemed to have usurped his place by the hearth, Ralph seemed to be gradually intercepting his influence over his aunt. How if he should end by appropriating to himself that greater blessing, for which the son of Sir Thomas Hargreave would thankfully have exchanged his birthright?

In compliance with Aunt Martha's excellent counsel that she should leave no moment unoccupied to favour the intrusion of unavailing grief, Margaret had exercised throughout the summer her talent for sketching from nature, which the beautiful scenery around Bardsel was well calculated to stimulate. And what more natural than that

Ralph Hargreave, who knew every “dingle and bosky bourne,” within ten miles of the Tower,—every beck and tarn, every crag and ravine,—should be accepted by the young artist as a guide. He carried in his hand her campstool and colour box, while Nero carried in his mouth her parasol, or Ralph Hargreave’s walking-stick. — And when Richard, soon after his arrival, added himself uninvited to the party, it was somewhat trying to perceive that his intrusion was all but unnoticed. It is true that, with his cigar between his lips, he did little to enhance the colloquial enjoyments of the party: for Dick was one of those who, either from shyness or lack of animal spirits, fancy themselves born exempt from the duty of taking part in social intercourse; as satisfied to accept the part of audience, as your Fanshawes and Tomlinsons to figure on the stage. He listened, therefore, while Ralph rattled pleasantly on; mingling with his instructive dissertations on the changes

of light and shade, and varieties of tint and vegetation, which created Claudes, and Hobbimas, Salvators and Ruysdaels, in the scenery through which they were rambling, anecdotes of foreign travel, and criticisms on contemporary artists. Dick Hargreave felt, once or twice, that he could have killed him for the interest with which Margaret attended to his lucubrations.

Of course—for he was a lover, and as a lover deaf and blind—of course, Dick Hargreave never surmised the origin of this well-established intimacy; namely that, early in that very summer, Ralph Hargreave had performed quarantine with Lord Fitzmorton and his travelling companion, at Trieste; and that he was consequently the last person of her acquaintance who had exchanged spoken words with Herbert Fanshawe. But of this, poor Dick knew nothing.

As they made their way over rustic bridges or under spreading elms, inhaling the pungent fragrance of the woods, and hailing

the inaugural song of the robins among the crisp holly, poor Richard was

Gathering sweet pain

About his fancy, till it thrilled again.

A brilliant French writer has said that every man contains within himself the ashes of a poet, dead in early youth. Most of us, even the least sentimental, have in their hearts a mortuary chamber, into which they retreat at will; an Elysium haunted by the shade of their first love; an Elysium whose fruits and flowers exhibit perpetual spring, albeit the realities of life, with sear and withered leaves or naked branches, have created winter elsewhere.

One day, when Aunt Martha had joined the sketching party, to marshal her young friends to a charming spot, near the source of the stream, where the water, yellow with the secretions of the neighbouring moor, gushed like liquid topaz over rocks overshadowed by spreading alders,—Dick Hargrave, irritated by the fluency of his cousin, suddenly exclaimed.

“What a pity, Ralph, that we can’t change fathers and fortunes! You ought to be in Parliament. If ever man had the gift of the gab and *la langue bien pendue*, it is *you*.”

A hearty laugh responded to this sudden burst of uncomplimentary compliment.

“What put this crotchet into your head, just now, my dear Dick?” said he, when the gravity of the party was restored.

“Because I had a letter from Dursley Park this morning; insisting on my standing for some confounded Irish borough, to which the O’Brennan family have the nomination. My father seems to have purchased it for the express purpose of annoying me.”

“But why should it annoy you? Why not go into Parliament, and be as prosy and contradictory as your neighbours? I daresay the vein is in you, if you would only work it. Do not give Miss Mordaunt reason to suppose me the only word-mill in the family!”

Margaret, who was establishing her camp-stool under Aunt Martha’s instructions, was

silent, taking little heed of the sumpter mules who had conveyed her artistic baggage.

“My father’s aversion to Parliament is perfectly comprehensible,” said Ralph, resuming what Dick Hargreave considered his preaching. “A strong-headed, strong-hearted, but uneducated man, Parliament is not his place. He does six times as much good, here ; where his Lancashire dialect does not weaken the authority of his masterly judgment and practical knowledge.”

“I was not speaking of your father ; I spoke of yourself,” said Dick, almost peevishly.

“Of myself, then. I am as little fitted as he is, for a place in our legislative assembly, as at present constituted. In the first place, I am a Dissenter. In the next, though endowed with an excellent education, by a provincial grammar-school and St. Bees, (completed by ten years’ trituration between the great milestones of travel and study), I am wholly untaught in that great conventional

school of polite life, which, laugh as you please, is by no means wanting in lessons of wisdom. In Parliament, Dick, I should appear as great a savage as the Indian youth in Wordsworth's *Ruth*. And why dishonour the championship of the great principles I should endeavour to advocate, by failing in trivialities wherein every donkey has the advantage over me? I should speak when it was my business to be silent; remain stunned by disgust when eloquence became a duty. I am a mere man of the woods, Dick; a creature of impulse; a great orator in my own parish; but totally unfit to fight in those courtly campaigns, whose trenches are opened by 'four-and-twenty fiddlers all of a row,' with a bow to the opposite faction, and *à vous Messieurs le feu !*"

"And why, pray, should you suppose *me* more subordinate than yourself?"

"Because you are to the manner born; because you are to the manner *bred*. From young Fanshawe, I heard a great deal of

your Dursley tactics. From yourself, I have learned a great deal more. I do not hesitate to say that you are the man wanted to represent, at some future time, the interests of our class, and the credit of our family :—two things never contemplated by the parliaments of the House of Stuart.”

Ralph could hardly refrain from a smile at the *renfrogné* air with which his cousin stood listening against the trunk of a beech tree, puffing his cigar in supreme disgust.

“I don’t despair, Dick,” he continued, “of seeing you, fifteen or twenty years hence, a portly Sir Richard Hargreave, or perhaps Lord Hargreave of Dursley ; supporting the existing government, and corresponding on Poor Laws, Emigration, or whatever may be the crack topic of the day, with your country cousin, Squire Ralph, of Hargreen ; presenting the kind regards of your beautiful Lady Hargreave,” (here he glanced over his shoulder at Margaret, who was busy with her pencil some twenty yards in their rear), “to

my simple-minded Yankee wife; who will be making pumpkin-pies at our factory in the county Palatine."

With a sudden start, Richard threw into the stream his half-finished cigar.

"You don't mean that you think of marrying an American?" cried he.

"My dear fellow, I have long thought of nothing else. Virginia and I have been engaged these six years; and were you as firm and consistent with your father as I have been with mine, (who, in the onset, started quite as violently as you did just now at the notion of a Transatlantic daughter-in-law), you would soon command Sir Thomas's consent to your marriage with Miss Mor-daunt."

Dick Hargreave was speechless from surprise. How superfluously had he tormented himself! His cousin Ralph an engaged man, advocating his marriage with Margaret! Mechanically, he stretched forth his hand to the man he had so sincerely detested a

quarter of an hour before ; and it needed all the influence of that conventional schooling recently alluded to by Ralph, to prevent him from indulging in the expansive action of a German comedy, and folding him to his heart.

“ And you really advise me,” said he, in the tone of a man who has had a load of paving-stones removed from his heart, “ to propitiate my father by accepting this seat of his ; and then, firmly adhering to my intentions concerning a settlement in life ?”

“ Precisely. Become an M.P., and leave the rest to fate. In these times, parliamentary duties are not so very laborious. Half the business of the state is transacted in clubs, and at cabinet dinners :—the other half by the great letters of the press. I would undertake to make a capital member out of Nero, by teaching him to bark his ayes and noes with a discretion calculated to put to shame the howlings of the Irish brigade.”

“ I am afraid, indeed, that my best chance

of a reconciliation with my father lies in capitulation," said Richard Hargreave, musingly. "Thanks for your advice, Ralph. I sincerely thank you. But after all," continued he, suddenly shrugging his shoulders, "even if I obtained his sanction to my projects, what chance have I with the person for whom I should thus sacrifice my tastes and inclinations?—What chance have I with *her*?"—

"Every chance, if you keep a cigar out of your mouth, and give yourself some little trouble to interest her feelings. As my father said to me last night: 'The garrison is asleep, Ralph; the fortress is off its guard. Why don't that young fellow up with his scaling-ladder, and carry it by a surprise?' My dear Dick, you young gentlemen of England, who live at home at too much ease, seem to think that elections and ladies' hearts are to be won by a wishing-cap! What have you done, pray, since you

came to Bardsel, by way of captivating this charming girl, except to gaze at her, like Master Slender at Anne Page; admiring the variable lights on the folds of her gown, or the lustre of the brightest eyes in the world—saving always those of my Virginia.”

Richard Hargreave pleaded guilty. But the sage advice of his kinsman was not lost upon him. Before the noon of a new day, he was gone;—gone to propitiate the displeasure of his father, gone to atone for past offences. It had been suggested by his cousin that he should “*reculer pour mieux sauter*.”

What he had said or done in the interim to soften the obduracy of Margaret Mordaunt, was a secret between them and the walls of the breakfast-parlour, where they parted. The last words of Aunt Martha, as he bade her a flurried adieu, were: “At Christmas then—at Christmas, my dear Dick, with your friend Mr. Mordaunt. At

Christmas for certain. We shall miss you sadly. Your return will be a real holiday at Bardsel."

It has thus been shown that, as the historiographer of the Hargreave dynasty, Barty Tomlinson, had, as usual, outstepped the truth. Till the epoch of Lady Arthur's wedding, Dick had done no more of the deeds imputed to him, than neglect to return to Dursley; while Sir Thomas had said no more than that he would cut him off with a shilling, if he persevered in his intention to marry the daughter of that old scoundrel, the late popular Dean of R——.

He added, indeed, that his son had far better turn his thoughts to their pretty neighbour at Morton Castle—Lady Emily—the daughter of Lady Fitzmorton, and sister of the Earl; a beautiful girl of eighteen, whose family wished nothing better than to encourage the courtship of the heir of Dursley Park, an estate which marched with their own.

The result of which suggestion was, that Dick Hargreave absented himself from the hymeneals of Emilia with the Bishop of Ross-trevor ; affording some colour to the malefactions of Barty Tomlinson, and enraging his father to a degree into which the temperament of a man so tender of his personal dignity, was little apt to be excited.

Great therefore was the surprise of Sir Thomas, when, after a feud of two months' duration, he beheld his son dissem-fly under the portico of Dursley ; as if simply in obedience to his commands.

He was wise enough to welcome home the prodigal without any slaying of calves, or outward demonstration of rejoicing ; contenting himself with intimating that the family was on the eve of quitting Dursley for a visit to Sir Hurst and Lady Clitheroe, and placing in his hands a credit to the amount of some thousands of pounds, with the contingent instructions which were to bring him into Parliament, as the honourable member

for the free and independent borough of Allenbogue.

Sir Thomas seemed instinctively aware that there is nothing like Parliament, to effect the subjugation of the most rampant human conscience.

CHAPTER VIII.

What joy have I in June's return,
My feet are parch'd, my eyeballs burn,
 I scent no flowery gust ;
But faint the flagging zephyr springs
With dry Macadam on its wings,
 And turns me "dust to dust."
Where are ye, birds, that blithely wing
From tree to tree, and gaily sing
 Or mourn in thicket deep ?
My cuckoo has some ware to sell,
The watchman is my Philomel,
 My blackbird is a sweep !
Where are ye, linnet, lark, and thrush,
That perch on leafy bough and bush,
 And tune the various song ?
Two hurdy-gurdists, and a poor
Street Handel grinding at my door
 Are all my tuneful throng !

HOOD.

WILLIAM MORDAUNT, meanwhile, was undergoing his inauguration as a denizen

of official life. As he surveyed the autumnal aspect of the Thames (slantingdicularly, as Ralph Hargreave's beloved Virginia would have termed it,) from the windows of his new chambers in Somerset House, he bethought him of those former flippancy days when he presumed to vilify the turbid waters of that opaque stream, as worthy only of the four rivers of an unwhisperable region.

He now prepared himself to honour the said stream as a glorious causeway, and the chambers as home, sweet home ; — and, after his dreary duties of executorship, those of his new office, were comparatively easy.

He had already settled upon his sister the whole proceeds of the residue of their father's estate, amounting to about a hundred a-year ; so as to render her comparatively independent, and leave no further drawback on the zeal with which he set about the study of his new duties.

But duties, the moment they assume that denomination, are apt to bud into thorns instead of roses. The head of William's department was an old gentleman of saturnine aspect ; bearing, unblushingly, a stark-naked head which seemed to have worn itself bald by severe labour ; who took delight in harassing the new-comer, as one of those empty idle scions of the aristocracy, which, more than once in the course of his official career, had been thrown upon his hands, incompetent to put together the alphabet, or repeat the multiplication table without a blunder. Nor did Mr. Mumpson's singular unsightliness put him greatly in conceit with young Mordaunt's gentlemanly air and pleasant countenance.

“ His father was that handsome Dean, so popular at R——, whose estate did not pay three half-pence in the pound,” quod Mumpson, a cousin-german once removed of Dean Barnes and Mrs. Pleydell. “ I must look sharp after him. I must teach him that

business is business. We know nothing here of bears'-grease and eau de Cologne. If he can't afford to ink his fingers when released from their French kids, I must make the Treasury understand that it is no part of my duties of office to dry-nurse puny dandies."

Very soon, however—much sooner than could have been expected—the good manners and good temper of Mordaunt worked their way with the grumbler. Thanks to his zeal and intelligence, Mumpson found his duties simplified, and the inkstains on his own fingers greatly diminished. The gloomy month of November beheld William incessantly at work; throwing off, by lamplight, the arrears of business accumulated by his predecessor. Mumpson was amazed to find that, instead of growling, according to custom at the extension of his work, the novice cheerfully accepted the labours heaped on his shoulders by the neglect of others.

The consequence was that he became a

favourite; and had fairly earned the Christmas holidays which the crusty old gentleman intended to vouchsafe as a concession.

Let any body chained, for the first time, to a distasteful destiny, avouch the delight of closing it on a given day ; flinging his over-worked pen into the fire, dismissing his dog's-eared blotting-paper, and saying to himself: "For three weeks to come, old fellow, thou art thine own master. An hour's over-sleep on a misty morning will not be fatal to thy prospects. Thou mayst read thy newspaper leisurely, not as if a pack of harriers, or Cuban bloodhounds, were hunting thee through those three heterogeneous leaders of the 'Times', so apt to resemble, in grim distinctiveness of feature, Atropos, Clotho, and Lachesis. Thou mayst eat thy muffin, and sip thy Bohea, without dyspeptic haste. Thou art thine own man. There is respite for thee. There is joy for thee. Go ! swallow, at leisure, thy turkey and mince pie,—and be thankful."

For William, indeed, the only home awaiting was one created by a good Samaritan; almost as much delighted at seeing her trap return from the rail with Mordaunt's glowing happy face predominating over the heaped up luggage, as if he had been a son of her own.

What a happy meeting between brother and sister! What a fervent embrace! For they were benefactor and benefited, as well as brother and sister;—parent and child—guardian and pupil. When William hailed his darling Meg, for the first time for a year past divested of mourning attire, happy, healthful, contented, he would willingly have enfolded the stern perpendicular Aunt Martha in an embrace as fond as that he had bestowed on her *protégée*.

At his last visit they had been comparatively strangers; and though grateful even then for her spontaneous kindness to his sister, he had not yet overcome his repugnance to her looks and manners. For a

time, the levity of prosperity clung to him after his downfall. He could not help regarding Aunt Martha, as he had seen her regarded at Dursley Park.

He knew better now. Now, he truly loved the good old soul who found happiness in the happiness of others, and in whose generous nature he recognized the prototype of her nephew. Thanks to Margaret's frequent letters, he was up in the politics of Bardsel; was familiar with the pranks of Nero, and testinences of Mrs. Rawson. Nay, at the very time that Dick Hargreave was writhing under jealousy of his cousin Ralph, William was prepared for the Bostonian bride to whose admission into the family, his patron at Hargreen had tardily granted his consent.

A happier day was never spent than the one following his arrival. It was fine sparkling Christmas weather. The ground was crisp with frost; the atmosphere crystalline. The winter sun glittered upon the bright-berried hollies, and the white blossoms of the

aurustinus. Winter was cheerful as summer ; and when Margaret proposed to her brother to walk over to Hargreen, and pay his earliest respects to old Ebenezer, instead of expressing surprise at the amended strength which enabled her to talk of five miles as a trifle, it seemed to him the most natural thing in the world that they should pass the day together, arm in arm, briskly pacing over the shelving wolds or across shrubby valleys.

Welcomed as they were at the factory, the homely hearty cheer of which afforded a new picture of life to William Mordaunt, he was rejoiced to see the familiar affection lavished by father and son upon the delicate Margaret.

“ Miss Mordaunt has been at the pains of teaching us how to make our barn here decent and comfortable for the reception of my wife,” said Ralph Hargreave, in explanation of their intimacy. “ But for her, we might have given poor Virginia a sorry impression of English civilisation. My father and I entertain very primitive notions of

chairs and tables; and are thankful to your sister for having chosen our chintzes, and furnished our book-cases. You must cast your eyes over the set of rooms prepared for my wife. Would to God she were in them, Mr. Mordaunt! I am a famous seaman and dauntless traveller, on my own hook. But to cross the Atlantic twice before I can place poor Virginia in my father's arms, seems to be assigning my happiness to another life."

"Three months hence, if I get leave of absence again at Easter," said William with ready sympathy, "I shall find Mrs. Ralph Hargreave happily established here; criticizing Margaret's chintzes and maplewood."

"Pray Heaven it may be so!" replied Ralph; while his father exhibited to his fair visitor what he called some "fine thingumbobs," which his son, who was to sail in a few days from Liverpool, was to convey as a marriage gift to his daughter-in-law. And though Margaret was little versed in the

water of the gems before her, she could appreciate the elegance and lightness of the setting :—how different from the family diamonds of Lady Bournemouth—embedded in as much silver as would have formed a moderate soup tureen.

“ Pray Heaven it may be so !” repeated Ralph, after surveying the charming group formed by their beautiful guest and the grey-haired ruddy-faced hale old man, who, while he pretended to despise the glittering gauds he was exhibiting, could not conceal his delight at the notion that they would soon adorn the beautiful young woman who was to bear the name of his exemplary son. “ But there is one thing, my dear Mr. Mor-daunt (forgive my plainness, but circumstances seem to have brought us closer together than ever strangers were brought before), there is one thing wanting to make the Easter visit you promise us, altogether perfect. Why can't you persuade this incomparable sister of yours to be as conde-

scending to Dick Hargreave, as she is to my poor father? Dick is one of a thousand. Dick has a heart of gold. Dick would render his wife happier than almost any woman but your sister (and my Virginia) deserves to be. And yet, she is as cold to him as if she had been immersed in Wenham Lake."

William Mordaunt replied by a shrug of the shoulders, implying "Don't ask me! Inscrutable are the caprices of womankind."

"As one who feels himself already more than half a married man," continued Ralph, "I have ventured to lecture her, at the risk of being thought impertinent. But I can't for the soul of me, bear to see two human beings cheating themselves out of such happiness as would fall to their united lot."

"I certainly consider them eminently qualified to be happy together," replied William.

"Ay, even should Sir Thomas persist in his opposition," continued Ralph. "For the thunder of Dursley will not prevent our

friend at Bardsel (who has more of the fairy godmother in her than any one I ever met with, out of a story-book), to withdraw her good offices. Aunt Martha's house will be their home, as long as they require one; and, at her death, her fortune their inheritance. And my father, let me tell you, who is a sort of Chancellor to her Exchequer, assures me Aunt Martha has not less than eight thousand a-year."

William Mordaunt gave little attention to this financial estimate. He was what Ebenezer Hargreave would have called "dazed." Sir Thomas Hargreave's *opposition*? Opposition to the union of his son with the daughter of Dean Mordaunt? Impossible! Impossible, because it was out of all reason; impossible, because the only time William had heard it hinted before, was by the untruthful lips of Barty Tomlinson. He recollected having been stopped one foggy day in London amidst the perils of a crowded crossing, by that benign individual; who,

after expressing some surprise that they never met at the Carlton or Coventry, to which clubs he knew that Mordaunt did not belong, inquired in a confidential tone of pretended sympathy whether "Sir Thomas Hargreave was ever likely to give his consent to the marriage of his son with Miss Mordaunt?"

A swerving omnibus and vociferous cad opportunely interposing, prevented William from expressing, in reply, so much as his amazement at the question. But it now recurred to his mind. He did not, however, dwell upon it with much anxiety. Friend and enemy must have been alike misinformed. Fate *could* not have so great a grievance in store for them as that his friend Richard Hargreave should have incurred, on their account, the displeasure of his family.

"I thought you knew it. I beg you ten million of pardons for my abruptness, but I thought you were perfectly aware of Dick's

position with his family," said Ralph, in reply to the cross-questions of his guest. "But I understand it all now. Aunt Martha, who has more delicacy in her uncouth frame than the most polished of duchesses, has scrupulously kept even your sister in the dark. Eager as we all are for the match, she was doubtless afraid of throwing a new difficulty in the way of Miss Mordaunt's acquiescence."

"Being, though half an angel, quite a woman," replied William, "she ought to have understood the advantage of an obstacle! Still, I am incredulous. You would perhaps be equally sceptical, had you seen the court paid to my sister by the whole family at Dursley Park."

"But in that whole family, is there anything real or honest? What frightful marriages have been made by the two daughters! To what a mere puppet has Sir Thomas, possessing all the elements of

independence, reduced himself by his paltry ambitions !”

“ Still, his uncalled-for assiduities to my family——”

“ When rich and prosperous.”

“ When, as they are now, noble in descent, and unspotted in character !” said Mordaunt, with spirit. He could scarcely be prevailed on to allow his sister time for luncheon, or gratify the pride of his hosts by surveying their preparations for the Boston bride, so eager was he to get back to Bardsel ; and, without grieving the feelings of Margaret by a hint upon the subject, ascertain from Aunt Martha the real state of the case.

Never in the course of the spinster's career, had a *tête-à-tête* with her been sought with such eagerness as, that evening, by her young guest. Dame Rawson would perhaps have been shocked, had she known that Miss Martha and a sightly young

gentleman were closeted together a whole hour in her dressing-room.

“What signifies, my dear Sir?” was all he could extract from the venerable spinster. “What on earth signifies whether my brother grants his consent before or after the marriage?—In the interim they can’t starve. All I possess is theirs, and shall be settled on my niece Margaret—my daughter Margaret. Moreover, the precious title my brother stoops to be proud of, will, on this occasion, turn to some account; for he will scarcely disinherit the son he can’t prevent from becoming Sir Richard Hargreave. ‘Hargreave of Dursley Park,’ figures, you know, among the families of the Landed Gentry—why or wherefore, it might puzzle the Heralds’ college to guess; for our forefathers have been hewers of wood and drawers of water ever since there was a hatchet or bucket in old England. But, once included in the index, no fear that my brother will cause it to be expunged. All

I have to ask, therefore, my dear young friend, is that you won't worry my child about this nonsense, which the Hargreen family ought to have had more sense than advert to. Dick will be here in a few days, and explain all. You can't be afraid of a shadow of subterfuge or deception on the part of my nephew !”

Afraid, he certainly was not ; but impatient, very. On the day appointed for his friend's arrival, William insisted on going to meet him at the station, fully resolved to elucidate the case on their way back to Bardsel. But no sooner had he caught sight of Hargreave's face, as he alighted from the railway-carriage, than he felt that an abrupt appeal was out of the question. Dick was evidently not only ill, but unhappy. Months of sickness could scarcely have wrought a greater change, than was perceptible in his usually cheerful countenance. He was looking as thin and careworn as William the preceding winter. They seemed to have exchanged natures.

"Yes—ill enough!" was his curt response to William's inquiries. "Only a feverish cold, however—only a neglected influenza. I shall be well in a day or two, if Aunt Martha and Goody Rawson will take me in hand."

"But something, I am certain, has occurred to annoy you. You are out of spirits as well as out of health."

"Am I? Do I look stupider than usual? The blue devils engendered by blue pill—"

"Nonsense! You never quack yourself, and are a bad dissembler."

"If I dissemble at all, Bill, a friend should respect my deceit. At all events, don't let's talk of disagreeables to-day. There are so few pleasant ones in life, that I can't afford to have my cross of white chalk prematurely rubbed out."

All this was far from satisfactory to William. Still less so when, at the first meeting between Dick Hargreave and Margaret, which was closely watched by her

brother, he saw tears rising in those round good-humoured blue eyes, whose honest glances were rarely troubled.

Before a word of explanation was exchanged between William and his friend, he fancied he knew as well what was passing in the mind of Dick Hargreave as if the worst had been told. Sir Thomas had interdicted the marriage, and Richard was come to withdraw his pretensions. Vexatious enough; for, for the first time during their acquaintance, Margaret, as they walked back from Hargreen, had spoken of him with interest—almost with affection. The knowledge that her brother's pecuniary obligations had been discharged, seemed to have removed a barrier from between them. But he might have had deeper cause for regret. Margaret might have *loved* the man cursed with so mercenary a father; and then, what careful hours must have ensued!

Before the close of the following day, sacred to Ralph Hargreave's embarkation for

Liverpool, Richard had opened his heart to his friend.

“Speak out, if you love me, dear Dick!” was William’s exclamation, on finding that Hargreave was seeking extenuating expressions in which to clothe his explanation. “Are we not brothers? Are we not friends? Say it, without hesitation. Your father has forbidden you to renew your addresses to Margaret?”

“My father knows me much too well to do anything of the kind,” replied Dick Hargreave. “I have a long story to tell. You appear to want patience to listen to it.”

“On the contrary,” exclaimed William, greatly relieved, “I am prepared to hear every word, every syllable.”

“When I arrived at Dursley in October, I found my father, instead of being surly, as I expected, all kindness and good-humour; so much so, that it became twice as difficult to thwart him. The O’Brennan connection seems to have converted the whole family

into courtiers. Even my mother, who used to think of nothing but her consoles and damask hangings, has the Irish peerage by heart. My father wanted to hurry me off to Ireland. 'The Bishop wrote urgent letters. The day was fixed for my nomination. I could not go too soon.' I requested leave to explain beforehand my intentions. 'No, the election was the first consideration.' Pledged as my father was to the Marquis, I could not recede.—I went,—"

"Your feats in Ireland let me spare you, my dear Dick. I followed your canvass in the newspapers; and, if you like, can repeat your speech on the hustings."

"Thanks! The first edition will suffice. Well, after the thing was over, the speaking and chairing, and roaring and drinking, and what was more to the purpose of the O'Brennans, the price of their free and independent borough lodged in the Dublin bank, I could not refuse to spend a day or two with Julia in her palace—the 'palace' of an

Irish Bishop, William, is a thing worth studying);—and I could see, poor, foolish girl, that she had already begun to feel she had paid dearly for the pleasure of being styled Right Honourable. The plague-spot, however, is not yet burnt out. Lady Arthur O'Brennan is as ambitious for me as formerly for herself; and, my father having confided to her his projects about Lady Emily Fitzmorton, she had evidently undertaken to talk me over."

"Till you ended by wishing her as taciturn as my lord the Bishop."

"It was easy not to listen, so long as she was voluble only in praise of Lady Emily, of whom she knows nothing, except that 'she is a person (poor Julia!) of her own rank in life!' But she was not satisfied with making me weary—she must needs make me wretched."

"Wretched?"

"By solemn protestations of knowing for a fact that—but you will be angry—"

“Angry with a woman’s idle gossip?”

“That she knew and could prove that the person to whom I was sacrificing all my prospects in life, was under positive engagements to Herbert Fanshawe.”

William could not repress a glance of such severe displeasure, that his companion had not courage to expose poor Margaret to further suspicion, by adding that Lady Arthur asserted her to be in correspondence with her favoured lover; some friend of Barty Tomlinson’s having seen, at Palermo, a letter addressed to Miss Mordaunt lying openly upon Fanshawe’s desk.

“Lady Arthur used to be fond of my poor sister,” said William feelingly. “I can make excuses for the opposition of Sir Thomas. I can make none for the slanders of his daughter.”

“You suppose them then to be mere slanders?” exclaimed Hargreave. “You do *not* believe that an understanding exists between her and that rascal?”—

"I would stake my right hand to the contrary!—Margaret has no secrets from me.—Margaret's breast is clear as crystal."

"So I have always felt, and so I feel!" cried Hargreave; "and, in consequence of all this, Julia and I parted after unkind things said between us than I had ever thought to utter to a sister of mine. But I cannot disguise from you, Bill, that I have never had an easy moment since I left Rosstrevor. Herbert Fanshawe's confounded face haunts me like a vampire's!"

"I will go this moment to Margaret, and obtain from her an explicit denial," said William hastily.

"No, do not harass her. It would be an insult to her dignity of mind to inform her that she had been unjustly suspected."

"Always the same kind and generous fellow!"—

"To proceed with my story. On arriving at Dursley, I found my father prepared by a

letter from Julia ('Lady Arthur,' as he invariably calls her) for my obstinate rebellion. I never saw him so angry, I never heard him so unjust. The heartless marriages of his daughters seem to have satisfied him that wedlock is a business to be transacted, not a happiness to be enjoyed. My long withheld acquiescence in his views about Parliament, seem to have been taken for earnest that I would marry Lady Emily, or do any other disagreeable thing he might propose."

"Sir Thomas, too, I presume, twitted you with my sister's preference for Fanshawe?"—

"No, my father does not seem to have considered the match on its moral side. With him, it is as practical as the balance of his bankers' book. He simply told me that, though I deserved a strait waistcoat, he should do nothing to impede my liberty of action; that I was free to go and marry Miss Mordaunt—I spare you the language in

which the permission was couched. But that not a guinea of his fortune should I ever touch, beyond the two thousand a year settled upon me when I went to college."

"Then, of course, all hope of the marriage must be at an end?" exclaimed William.

"I fear so—I greatly fear so!—How could I ask her to share such a pittance, she, of whom all my father's wealth appeared unworthy!"

"I don't mean *that*, Dick. By Jove! you can't suppose I meant *that*. But Margaret would never consent to be the cause of your disinheritance. And just as she was beginning to come round!—She spoke of you yesterday as I never heard her speak before!"

Dick Hargreave's eyes brightened.

"If you really think that she—that her—that I have still the least chance—that these confounded stories of Julia's have no foundation—"

"My dear Hargreave, listen to me;" cried

Mordaunt. "Your cousin Ralph, who has more sense in his little finger than we in our united noddles, remonstrated with me lately, in the most serious manner, about the way in which you are trifling with your happiness. 'Two young people made for each other,' he says, 'will perhaps mar their allotted destinies, for want of some reasonable being to speak plain English to them, and compel them to act with plain sense.' He insists that even your father might be rendered reasonable, if reasonably dealt with."

"Then, by heavens, I only wish he had undertaken the task before he sailed!" cried Richard.

Their conference was interrupted by Aunt Martha; who, believing her nephew to be alone, came to ascertain from him the cause of his depression, and do her best to relieve it.

What she said, or what she promised, need not be related. Suffice it that the usual

pacificatory influence of the Bardsel atmosphere prevailed; and that before a week expired, Richard Hargreave's physiognomy was nearly on a par in point of cheerfulness with the rest of the party.

CHAPTER IX.

Though long of winds and waves the sport,
Condemned in wretchedness to roam,
Thou yet shalt reach a sheltering port,
And quiet home.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

It was not, however, without trepidation that William Mordaunt approached his promised interview with his sister. When he said: "Margaret, put on your bonnet and cloak, and come and take a turn with me on the terrace," his voice faltered. She was his all on earth—his child—his darling. He still thought her as superlative as when he

offered her his broken marbles and torn Philip Quarll, at Bassingdon Parsonage. Since then, he had loved nothing better. Foolish flirtations he had had ; giddy entanglements ; but he had given his heart to no one. There was no rival to the holy natural affection which he bore his sister. He was her only earthly champion :—she, his guardian angel.

And if, after all, she should prove untrue ? If she should confess that she had deceived him, and was no longer intitled to his confidence ?—But no, impossible ! Such a face, such a voice, could not be those of an impostor.

They had walked on in silence several minutes, before he found courage to turn the key of the Blue Chamber. He even tried to speak of indifferent things ; of Ralph Hargreave's voyage ; of Nero's mischiefs. At last, as is usual in such cases, he burst abruptly into the subject nearest his heart.

"Tell me, Margaret," said he, "answer me clearly and truly. Is all at an end between you and Herbert Fanshawe?"

"As much as if the grave had closed between us," was Miss Mordaunt's untroubled reply.

"You do not correspond?"

"I never received but one letter from him; from Palermo,—a farewell letter. You may see it, if you think proper."

"But why never mention it before?"

"I thought the subject might annoy you, and just then, you had troubles enough. To me, it was a source of comfort; as proving that, though all was at an end between us, I had not over-estimated the love I had inspired. From that moment, my mind became settled. You must have seen that I am no longer repining or anxious. I submit to an inevitable misfortune."

At that moment, William Mordaunt could have found it in his heart to imitate certain caperings of Nero's—so light was his heart.

If Margaret could thus composedly admit that her heart was in her own keeping, what hope for the future ! He was wise enough, however, not to express his exultation. He left it to poor Dick to pursue his advantage. On the contrary, he took the opportunity of entering into a thousand dry details of business ; begging her to appoint a co-trustee with him for the little sum of £1800, her share of their father's estate. It was not necessary to explain how largely the amount exceeded what he had been compelled to appropriate to the payment of his own debts ; and Margaret, believing it to be her legal due, requested only that he would wait till Ralph Hargreave's return.

“ He will be here in March. Till then, all may remain as it is.”

William secretly hoped *not*. His friend Dick must make very ill use of his time if he did not, before the holidays were over, manage to convince her how much a lasting union would tend to their mutual happiness.

Strange to relate, it was the eloquence of the aunt rather than the nephew, which wrought the most effective change in her feelings. The precise spinster, a female Lord Angelo who had never thought of love in her own case, otherwise than as a disorder to be prayed against, like the measles or a typhus fever, hit upon an argument which brought eloquent blushes into the cheeks of Margaret.

“I only wish, my dear,” said she, “that you would come to an understanding with yourself concerning your objections to my nephew; for since you prefer no one else, why shouldn’t you marry *him*? You were a girl, almost a child, Margaret, when you first shrugged your shoulders at poor Dick. But you are a woman now. Trouble has rapidly matured you. So that you have no excuse either for not knowing your own mind, or for having one you are ashamed of. It can’t be for his looks, my dear, that you discard him. You, so pure and so modest,

would scarcely set such store on personal gifts. And even if poor Dick's honest, sheepish face isn't quite to your liking, do you suppose that kindness and affection, and truth and worthiness, wouldn't blind you to the cut of your husband's countenance before six months were over your head?"

With so plain-spoken a special pleader to back him, with William continually elevating his friend by deference to his understanding and principles, how, *how* was she to hold out? They were constantly together. She found in the object of her former disdain, a far more cultivated being than she had supposed him. If wanting in the meretricious brilliancy of Fanshawe, Dick Hargreave possessed sterling sense, and extensive information: the groundwork of a valuable member of society.

That he was willing to incur the risk of disinheritance for the happiness of calling her his wife, was an argument in his favour such as no female heart was likely to undervalue. And when she saw his clouded brow brighten

under the influence of her kinder treatment, she looked so conscious of her power, that the chances were ten million to one he would eventually come off the winner.

No one, in short, was surprised, not even old prudish Goody Rawson, when it was announced in the family that the wedding-day was fixed.

Aunt Martha's practical sense had again befriended them.

"Don't plague my brother further on the subject," said she. "He has given his conditional consent. Let him know when the event is over; and, for the sake of appearances, he will sooner or later come round."

Even William Mordaunt was forced to admit, that pride, "by which sin fell the angels," and by which sin so many mortals contrive to mar their earthly happiness, ought not to interfere with prospects so auspicious.

Poor Aunt Martha! The maternal instincts, dormant in her nature, woke up as

naturally on occasion of a wedding under her roof, as though she had been a dowager-duchess, getting rid of the ugliest of half-a-dozen portionless daughters. Away she went, per express-train, to Liverpool, to hurry together a rich *trousseau*, as may be done at sight where a liberal hand and over-flowing purse are under contribution.

“My nieces are too advantageously married,” argued Aunt Martha, “to require aid of mine ; and I may, therefore, choose my pet and heiress where the Hargreave family are most likely to derive happiness and credit.”

A dower was consequently settled upon the future Mrs. Hargreave, including the estate of Bardsel, such as rendered innocuous the thunder-storms of Dursley Park.

Never was spinster so happy as Aunt Martha, while arranging with her kinsman Ebenezer, certain items of the marriage contract ; with her Scotch gardener, the exotics

that were to figure at the wedding-breakfast ; and with Margaret herself, how many letters per week were to pass between them, when the young couple were settled in London after the meeting of Parliament.

Interests in common, difficulties in common brought the pair (rapidly becoming the *happy* pair) closer together. As a matter of family formality, Margaret wrote to acquaint her brother Reginald at Palermo, and her aunt, Lady Milicent Macwheeble at Bath, with her approaching marriage ; from the latter, receiving back her letter in an envelope, addressed in the German text handwriting of the reverend doctor ; from the former, some weeks after the event had taken place, a letter of warm congratulation, on the part of the Honourable Mrs. Mor-daunt and himself, which had every appearance of being copied from the Complete Letter Writer. There was ten times more kindness in the gripe of the hand with which

old Ebenezer bestowed on his new kinswoman on her wedding-day a string of pearls worth a Jew's ransom ; and fifty times more cordiality in Aunt Martha's gleeful school-children, when they came to throw flowers on the path of that fairest of brides, on her way to the church portal.

When the handsome travelling-carriage, presented by the thoughtful aunt, rolled from the door of Bardsel Tower, the huzzas of a thousand grateful hearts attested the liberality with which the families of Bardsel and Hargreen did honour to the joyful event.

“ On the 2nd of February at Bardsel, by the Rev. Randle Brooke, rector of the parish, Richard Hargreave, Esq., M.P., to Margaret, only daughter of the late Dean Mordaunt,” was the simple notification transmitted to the newspapers by William Mordaunt. But some days afterwards, came forth a pompous paragraph ; describing the bridegroom at full length, as only son of Sir Thomas Hargreave,

Bart., M.P., of Dursley Park, in ——shire, and Oak Hill, in the Isle of Wight; and the bride as only daughter of the late Honourable and Very Reverend Reginald Hammond Mordaunt (brother to Henry, Viscount Milndenhall), by Lady Mary, second daughter to the Earl of Bournemouth.

“ Good !” exclaimed Ebenezer Hargreave, shaking his jolly sides with laughter. “ This here’s of home manufacture !—Hurrah !—The heart of Dursley Park is on the melt. In a year’s time, mark my words, all will be forgiven and forgotten.”

Even Aunt Martha, though her interference in her nephew’s behalf had been resented by rigid silence on the part of her brother, was satisfied that a reconciliation was at hand.

“ I groodge him his darter-in-law ! By Jove and John Watt, I groodge him his darter-in-law !” cried old Ebenezer, while pointing out to his neighbour at Bardsel Tower, the cheerful opening he discerned

for her nephew and niece. "I'd rather have had her for mine, than the book-learnedest Boston Muse, though a President's blood-relation into the bargain.—But don't be diown-hearted, coosin Martha.— Our yoong friends were born wi' a golden spune in their mouths; though they'd need may be of a long handle to soop wi' the de'il at Doorsley."

A far different view of the case was presented to Dick Hargreave himself, in a letter from Elinor Maitland, still patiently awaiting the preferment of her affianced lover. Sensible, like every one admitted to the acquaintance of Margaret Mordaunt, of the attractive qualities and superior endowments of the Dean's daughter, she heartily congratulated him. But it was her painful task to insinuate a bitter drop into his cup of joy.

"Lose no time my dear Mr. Hargreave," she wrote, "in effecting a reconciliation with

your parents. I should ill deserve the title of dear old friend which you assign me in communicating your marriage, if I did not tell you, that Lady Hargreave's health is considered by her friends and physicians very precarious. Independent of her vexations arising from your differences with Sir Thomas, her domestic happiness has been shaken by the loss of her daughters. Your mother is no longer the same woman; and if you value your future peace of conscience, you cannot be too prompt in attempting a reconciliation which might at least avail to console her declining days."

By this reasonable letter, the happy bridegroom was sorely troubled. Unless the health of Lady Hargreave had been hopelessly impaired, he knew he should have heard nothing on the subject from his friend Elinor. And when Parliament met, and his father, instead of hastening up to the assemblage from which he derived his main importance

in life, paired off till the Easter vacation, Richard felt that the danger must be imminent, and longed to rush back to Dursley, and tell that suffering, homely, woman—that dying mother—that, in spite of appearances, he still dearly loved her. But wounded pride forbad him to stir. He was afraid of seeming to covet the hundreds of thousands of Sir Thomas; and so, the dying anguish of the mother that bore him remained uncomforted.

Her daughters, long summoned, came at last; Richard, unsummoned, came not at all.

“Have the chintz covers placed in the drawing-room, and the canvas bags on all the chandeliers,” was the final order to the housekeeper, which announced that Lady Hargreave considered her case hopeless.—“It will be very *very* long, before company assembles again at Dursley Park!”

As she drew near, however, to the El Arat dividing Time from Eternity, at whose aspect

the narrowest mind expands,—when brocades and embossed plate, and shekels of tested gold give place to visions of skulls and cross-bones,—when the perfumed atmosphere of the gay saloon is resigned for the stifled breath of the sick chamber, whence there is no issue, save into the noisome vault,—wiser words issued from her lips. The dying woman requested that, when she should be no more, her first-born and his wife might be sent for; and not even the worldly Sir Thomas Hargreave or money-spinning Sir Hurst Clitheroe, dared oppose the last request of a faithful wife and thrifty mother, who, for thirty previous years, had indulged in no will of her own.

The young couple were accordingly summoned and forgiven;—summoned reluctantly, forgiven coldly. But Sir Thomas was well-content that his son should grace the pompous funeral, by which he rendered such honours as he was capable of comprehending, to the memory of the dead.

His daughters and sons-in-law figured in the ceremony with a dignity that was manna to his heart ; and when, three months afterwards, the death of Lord Mildenhall and a mulct of certain fees to the Heralds' College, converted William Mordaunt and his sister into Honourables, as if the Dean their father had survived to represent the family honours, he became almost reconciled to his daughter-in-law. At all events, no one better understood the axiom dear to every new dynasty—that unity is strength. Like Napoleon the Great, and other modern potentates, he felt that “a house divided against itself shall not stand.”

The Honourable Mrs. Hargreave was accordingly recommended to the homage and attention of his daughters ; as wife and mother to the future representatives of the house of Hargreave of Dursley.

CHAPTER X.

Now, Time hath given my Margaret's face,
A thoughtful and a quiet grace ;
Though happy now, her past distress
Hath left a pensive loveliness.
Fancy hath turn'd her fairy gleams
And her heart broods o'er home-born dreams.

WILSON.

THENCEFORWARD, it would have been a difficult task to find a happier couple than the Hargreaves. Previous obstacles tended to enhance their enjoyment of domestic tranquillity: while the tranquil serenity of her days served to develop the matronly beauty

of the Dean's daughter, mature her understanding, and endow her with the humble consciousness of her good fortune.

In process of time, two lovely children—a boy and a girl—perfected their happy household. Previous to the birth of the latter, having performed with her brother and husband, a summer pilgrimage of love to the well-remembered old churchyard of Bassington, where a marble tablet, erected to the memory of their mother, was now nearly illegible from weather stains,—she promised herself to revive the forgotten name of Mary Mordaunt, by assigning it, if a girl, to her expected infant.

It would be tedious to relate—certainly, tedious to read—a daily chronicle of unsullied domestic happiness. The diary of Robinson Crusoe, even if written by Defoe, would cease to charm if the scene were laid in a land overflowing with milk and honey. Let us pass, therefore, in ellipsis the first six years of Richard Hargreave's life, during

which he represented “that Phoenix, called the happiest of men;” established, with his devoted wife and thriving children, in a charming house, in Whitehall Gardens—with Bardsel Tower, and Dursley, and Oak Hill—to say nothing of foreign travel—open for his summer recreation; doing his duty to his country unshackled by the slavery of official occupation; and happy in the friendship of a brother-in-law, who, for perfect congeniality of nature, might have been his born brother.

William, meanwhile, had worked his way to a liberal income, which rendered him proudly independent of the generosity of the new Lord Mildenhall. But even with the Mildenhalls themselves, the Hargreaves lived on easy terms. Between Margaret and the mercenary Viscountess, no great sympathy of feeling prevailed. But Reginald comprehended the value of so well-estated a relative as Hargreave:—a man universally esteemed; a man who had married his sister without a

dowry, and provided nobly for his brother ; and whose house and table, moreover, were exactly such as should have done honour to his own fifteen thousand per annum, had he possessed the courage to enjoy them. He had consequently gone three parts of the way to effect a reconciliation, and obliterate the impression of his previous churlishness.

Had any one reminded the Dean's daughter, in the matronly prime of beautiful five-and-twenty, that she once ventured to reject a lot so replete with blessings, she would have replied with an almost incredulous smile. Aunt Martha sometimes hazarded a facetious allusion to her former capricious coyness ; when, with little Mary climbing on her father's knees, and little Bill rolling on the floor with poor toothless old Nero, Mrs. Hargreave, side-by-side with her happy husband, enjoyed at Bardsel Tower the recurrence of those autumnal pleasures which had first facilitated a better understanding between

them. But Margaret joined heartily in her mirth. Without a wish unfulfilled, without a care for the present or fear for the future, she had indeed grounds for the daily thanksgiving which conveyed her grateful homage to the throne of the Almighty.

There were two persons, however, who watched her prosperous career with the grudging envy of an inferior nature. Lady Arthur O'Brennan was now a widow. Two years after her marriage, the death of the Bishop of Rosstrevor released her from the banishment she found so irksome. According to some authorities, his lordship died of Irish humour and Irish brogue thrown into his constitution by the constraint of the silent system; according to others, of the superior quality of the claret secured to his daily potations by the handsome fortune of his wife; but leaving in his diocese the credit of having opened his purse-strings and heart-strings alike to papist and protestant, to the

great scandal of the heads of the national church.

Lady Arthur, who, on returning to England, a showy widow with a jointure of two thousand a-year, immediately determined to place herself at the head of her father's magnificent establishment in Berkeley Square, had scarcely patience with the secluded habits of her unpretending sister-in-law. Lady Clitheroe, on the other hand, who, in spite of Sir Hurst's efforts to over-gild his inferiorities of birth and breeding, had experienced her full share of those snubs, which the justice of society deals upon all counterfeits, was inexpressibly provoked to perceive that Margaret, who had never wasted a thought, look, or gesture, in paltry endeavours to advance herself in the fashionable world, had attained undesignedly the position which Sir Hurst and herself were vainly labouring to conquer.

Margaret remained happily unconscious of

their animosity. Over the mind of her husband, his worldly-wise sisters possessed not a shadow of influence; and it was only by hints from intermeddling people, like Barty Tomlinson, whose iron-grey head was still a Pandora's box of social mischiefs, that she was informed how much Lady Clitheroe was shocked at seeing William Mordaunt an all but stationary guest in Whitehall Gardens; or that Lady Arthur O'Brennan ventured to whisper that Mrs. Hargreave had a sadly provincial air—that she was under-dressed, and a dowdy.

Margaret laughed these accusations over with her husband, when they enjoyed a quiet evening together. But their quiet evenings were fewer than in the first years of their marriage. Richard, no longer a lay-figure returned by an Irish borough, was the representative of a struggling manufacturing town; an active co-operator with his cousin Ralph; who, having inherited his father's important

stake in the country, was the busy advocate in parliament of a populous district of his native county. As merely the son and heir of the wealthy Sir Thomas Hargreave, Dick might perhaps have become uxorious and supine. But his kinsman was ever at hand to rouse up his dormant energies, and claim his services and exertions; and even Mrs. Ralph, who, to the classical features and fine countenance of a Roman matron, united the over-cultivated and over-active faculties of a Bostonian Madame Roland, was not without her share in stimulating his activity.

Shrinking from all display, nay, as far as was compatible with his position, avoiding every species of publicity, Hargreave was a highly valuable, because a thoroughly conscientious representative of the people. His father, indeed, regarded him as a radical; and, occasionally, under the influence of Lady Arthur's insidious whispers, rebuked him for the democratic plebeianism of his policy;

prognosticating revolution and national ruin from the innovations advocated by that dangerous fellow, the republican of Hargreen. But Dick Hargreave held unmoved the even tenour of his way; which was that of most educated English gentlemen of the nineteenth century—liberalized by travel, and humanized by Christian love.

As in the previous instance of his father, Parliament proved an invaluable school to Richard. His mind acquired consistency, his manners confidence, under the compulsory self-examination consequent upon having opinions to answer for. His mind was thoroughly enlisted in the cause of public progress; and consequently, perhaps, a little too much estranged from the trivialities of domestic life. It is difficult to divert one's attention from the majestic manœuvres of a seventy-four, to hail the dancing pleasure-boats spreading their light sails in the breeze.

He had less need, however, than most

public men to regret the occupations which deprived his wife of his society. William Mordaunt was always at hand to be the escort of his sister; and Hargreave was consequently unvexed by solicitude when detained by an important debate from the dinner-parties and assemblies they would otherwise have attended together. Nobody expects to see an active member of Parliament perpetually dangling after his wife; and Mrs. Hargreave and Mr. Mordaunt were nearly as often announced together at fashionable parties, as though they had been united by marriage rather than birth. Mordaunt was a general favourite; the type of a well-born, well-bred, popular London man, invited everywhere, welcome everywhere. His sister could not be better and safer than under his wing.

Had it not been for such a mainstay, Margaret's unambitious nature would have been perfectly content to subside into the shade of her well-ordered home. Engrossed by her husband and children, she cared little about

the world; *too* little according to the Clitheroes and Lady Arthur. *She* had not served to the severe task-work of fashion, that early apprenticeship which appears essential to inculcate due respect for certain names and certain habits. Needless therefore were the exhortations of Ralph's wife, her didactic cousin Virginia, against submission to conventional slavery; and Richard had the happiness of finding his Margaret as pure of soul, as upright, and as simple, at the end of five seasons in town, as when holding her father's hand by the fireside at the Deanery, or sketching beech-trees at Bardsel by the side of the mountain stream.

Among those who rendered her their unqualified, though constrained homage, was Herbert Fanshawe; now noted as one of the most rising men of the day. Fanshawe had long since established himself as a noun-substantive. Sir Claude was gathered to the forefathers to whom, in his life-time, he had been careful never to allude. During

the absence of his son in the Mediterranean, the K.C.B., who had so shrouded his origin in obscurity that, at his decease, no date could be inscribed on his coffin, was found one morning dead in his bed, at his lodgings in Spring Gardens. Not so much as a menial had closed his eyes. For in his ambition to remain, if not a hero, at least an Adonis to his valet-de-chambre, Sir Claude never admitted the attendance of *his* at his toilet, after or before a certain hour, sacred to cosmetic duty; and when, on his bell remaining unring till evening, the door of his chamber was forced open, his attendant for fifteen preceding years could scarcely recognize in the ghastly, aged corpse, the spruce middle-aged master, whose wig and teeth and calves—a moiety of his factitious self—were nightly laid aside on his dressing-table.

Little besides these miserable bequeathments remained for his son; excepting the

results of the worst education bestowed on an *ingenuus puer* since the days of Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield. But most people considered that Herbert was greatly the gainer by the loss of his father's precepts and example. His good gifts would now appear. No one had ever disputed his abilities; and as his supple nature captivated friends in all directions, it was not long before he was elevated on a pedestal in public life, at once commanding the deference of the vulgar, and requiring him to be studious of his attitude.

Of the seven years which had elapsed since his departure for the Mediterranean with Lord Fitzmorton, five had been occupied in diplomatic service: as attaché at Naples, Madrid, St. Petersburg, and finally as Secretary of Legation in the head-quarters of diplomacy, Paris. Such a superstructure of moral schooling, if little calculated for the benefit of the immortal soul, could scarcely

fail to effect what the exterior of Mr. Fanshawe undeniably presented—the perfection of a finished gentleman. He was so quiet—so undemonstrative—so unpretending ! You might be twenty times in his company before you dreamed of asking his name. But when you *had* asked it, after a further glance at his deportment and half an hour's attention to his easy flow of conversation, you wondered how it was possible he could have a moment escaped your notice. By those who had once conversed with him, he was sure to be singled out in all societies, again and again. Not a word jarred against the feelings or wishes of his interlocutor. Yet he had the appearance of frankness ; and in ceding to the opinion of others, contrived to exhibit a progressive conviction, highly gratifying to his converter.

“ Throughout all your London society, *chère Comtesse*,” said the Marquis d’Altavilla, the Neapolitan Secretary of Legation, to one of the conscript mothers of the fashionable world, “ I have met with nothing like Fann-

sho'. Ah! Fannsho' he is charming! In Italy, we much admired Fannsho' as a *brave garçon*. Here, I find him progressed into a consummate man; to be one day a statesman, and, *en attendant*, the best company in the world."

By this, it may be inferred that Fannsho' was a general favourite. For Altavilla was a passive interpreter of fashionable opinion. Like most astute Italians, he was the echo of the powerful,—the shadow of the great; and had Bayard or the admirable Crichton been wandering about St. James's Street, and black-balled at White's, Altavilla would not have returned his bow. By studious attention to the rising sun, and the progress of the fixed stars, the well-whiskered Marquis had made rapid way in London life. For his object was not, like most of his countrymen, to sell a few second-rate pictures and antiquities, at first-rate prices, and carry back to his dilapidated home some credit as "a sportsman," or judge of horseflesh. The Marquis d'Alta-

villa was Cœlebs in search of a well-jointured widow; and, with the smile of a Jesuit and trailing flat-footed tread of a Franciscan, insinuated himself, *petit à petit comme l'oiseau fait son nid*, into the best-regulated families.

“Fannsho’,” who, at Paris, had heard the chimes at midnight with the wily Neapolitan, and fully understood the value of the cowl in which for a specific purpose he enveloped his *mauvaise tête*, requited his praise, in kind, by alluding to the Altavilla palace at Genoa; and the castle of Altavilla’s wealthy grandmother in the Milanese; and thus, in imitation of Sir Godfrey Kneller’s simile of “the two hands that help to wash one another,” their mutual laudations tended wonderfully to the establishment of both, in fashionable estimation.

“Fanshawe knew Altavilla in his own country, where he is amazingly thought of,” secured the admission of the latter into the

Travellers'. "Altavilla was intimate with Fanshawe at Naples, when he was *attaché*, and declares that no Englishman ever met with such *succès* !" directed towards the handsome stranger the smiles of those who create the midnight sunshine of fashion.

"Blest pair of Syrens !" How many were destined to be misled by their specious song.

It was not till nearly a year after "Fannsho's" establishment in London, that chance brought him into contact with the Dean's daughter. He inquired, on his arrival in England after the Hargreaves; and finding them occupy what he considered a less than second-rate position,—decently buried, as he called it, in the leaden coffin of domestic felicity,—he congratulated himself that he should see nothing of them. "The renewal of that sort of early acquaintance was always a bore." Even William Mordaunt had not fallen in his way. For Fanshawe revolved in an exclusive orbit. He lived in the

thrice-distilled odour of fashionable sanctity ; whereas William was content to dine at the Athenæum, hear the opera from a stall, nay was occasionally seen applauding a new play from the public boxes ! Fannsho' and Altavilla were scarcely cognisant of such people.

Mrs. Hargreave had observed in the papers a notification of Herbert Fanshawe's arrival in London ; but with as little emotion as she would have read that of Esther Pleydell,—now the plausible wife and nurse of a super-rheumatised DD. To her, he was no more than one of those youthful visions which disappear from the mind of a happy matron and mother, as trap-ball, bat-fowling, dog-carts and tandems, from that of the father of a family. She was not a frequenter of balls or assemblies. Her husband, devoted to his parliamentary duties loved to pass at home, their cheerful happy home, the evenings he could command for private enjoyment ; a mode of life for which she was qualified alike by her retiring nature, and country-bred

girlhood. It was consequently from her sister-in-law, Julia—though a bishop's widow, still as much Julia as ever—that she first heard mention of her former love.

For Lady Arthur O'Brennan managed to flutter round the outskirts of the circle among whose "thrones, dominions, prince-doms, powers," Herbert Fanshawe was a Serene Highness. During a severe illness by which Sir Thomas Hargreave was attacked one bitter spring, three years after the death of his wife, his daughter had installed herself as his nurse; and during his convalescence, did the honours of his house so pleasantly, that she had ever since remained in Berkeley Square, enjoying, on sufferance, the luxury created by thirty thousand a-year. And whereas to a foreigner—even a foreigner possessing a mythical grandmother with an apocryphal castle in the Milanese,—such luxury appears scarcely less than royal, Altavilla paid assiduous court to the really handsome and nominally millionaire widow.

Till the arrival in England of Fannsho', indeed, he was unaware of her ancestral insignificance. But even when apprised of the humble origin of the Hargreaves, the Marquis was too well satisfied with Sir Thomas's hospitality to withdraw his suit; while his informant affected such respectful deference towards the lady of Altavilla's courtship, that it was impossible for her to advance a step nearer towards intimacy. The son of Sir Claude was one of those who can assign to others the exact limitation of their acquaintance.

"I suppose you have met your old friend, Herbert Fanshawe?" inquired Lady Arthur of Margaret, in the course of a morning visit, made on pretence of condolence respecting the illness of her little niece, but in reality to ask what she fancied would be a trying question.—"Not *seen* him!—Why he goes everywhere!"

"And I nowhere," replied Mrs. Har-

greave. "Dear Mary's illness keeps me more than usually at home."

"You will find him immensely altered."

"Probably, then, I have seen him without recognising him. At our age, seven or eight years effect so complete a change!"

"Richard is not much altered. But then *he* has no physiognomy. Mr. Fanshawe, who used to have so wild and picturesque a look, has sobered down into a gentlemanly man, with regular features and well-trimmed whiskers; who might pass for a banker, or a professor of moral philosophy."

"I heard stories of him from the Delaviles, on their return from Naples," replied Mrs. Hargreave, "which sounded neither very sober, nor very moral, nor very philosophical."

"Lady Delavile is such a censorious woman! I daresay she was angry that he paid no attention to her daughters—part of an attaché's duty, which he was sure to neglect."

“ On the contrary, she complained of the vivacity of his attentions. But why vindicate or accuse him ? Neither Richard nor my brother have kept up the smallest acquaintance with Mr. Fanshawe ; and we shall probably meet as strangers.”

Lady Arthur was provoked by what she considered her sister-in-law's hypocrisy. She possessed no standard by which to measure the feelings of Margaret. She had never been a mother. Her married life was spent in a land of exile with an uncommunicative husband. The all-absorbing interest of a really happy home was an influence she could not realize.

Mrs. Hargreave was, however, brought earlier than she had anticipated into contact with the diplomatic professor of moral philosophy.

The following week, the prolongation of an important debate rendered it impossible for her husband to escort her to a Royal

Concert ; and William Mordaunt brought from the House of Commons the unwelcome news that his brother-in-law was required to speak, but that she must proceed alone to the Palace.

Margaret demurred. However sensible of the distinction conferred by the invitation, she preferred pleading indisposition, and remaining absent.

“No—no ! You must *really* go !”—cried her brother. “Sir Thomas would be furious.—Even Dick would be angry if your shyness prevented your being present. Write to one of your friends, and ask leave to accompany her—Lady Fitzmorton, for instance.”

“She is not invited.”

“Or Lady Delavile ?”—

“At Brighton. And it is now too late to propose myself to any one with whom I am less intimate.”

“Reginald and Lady Mildenhall are going. I met her ladyship sneaking into

Howell and James's last week, with a face care-crazed by the necessity of buying a new gown."

"I would far rather stay away than accompany them. Reginald is civil enough ; as kind, I suppose, as it is in his nature to be. But Lady Mildenhall is as cold as a stone. She always seems to mistrust me."

"So she does her own sisters. I daresay she likes you quite as much as she likes other people. And my brother and sister-in-law are exactly the persons for you to be seen with. Say yes, Margaret ; and I will be off to Carlton Terrace, and settle the business for you in a moment."

Margaret was too much in the habit of saying "yes" to those she loved, to persevere in her reluctance. And as forms of the most decorous amity were maintained by the Viscount and Viscountess towards the brother and sister who were no longer in want of their kindness, the arrangement was

easily effected. Mrs. Hargreave's carriage was to follow them to the Palace ; and they could find seats together.

William Mordaunt, who had seldom occasion to see his sister in full dress, arrayed in the splendid family diamonds with which the pride of Sir Thomas had prematurely endowed the future "Honourable Lady Hargreave," was inexpressibly struck as he led her to the carriage, by the beauty of her face and figure. The only drawback ever urged against its perfection, even by the partial Aunt Martha, was a deficiency of colour. And now, the excitement of a nervous panic, aided by the brilliancy of her dress, produced a momentary flush. William gazed at her till the heart within him thrilled with pride. There was something in her guileless face so different from the set smile and tutored glances of the daughters of fashion ; seared by perpetual candle-light, and haggard from unwholesome vigils. Mrs. Hargreave's beauty

was as the simple beauty of a child, whose bloom comes and goes like April sunshine ; whose eyes are unwatchful, whose smiles spontaneous as a rainbow.

But had he chanced to accompany her to the concert, his admiration of the charming combination of girlhood and womanhood developed in her beauty, would have increased a thousand-fold. The dawning of life in Pygmalion's fabled statue can scarcely have been more touching than the changes of Mrs. Hargreave's countenance under the influence of music. Though passionately fond of it, the secluded life she led prevented her ear from being familiarized with the *chef-d'œuvres* of the day. It was seldom she heard so exquisite a performance as she had now occasion to enjoy ; and her lovely face was lighted up with a radiance from within, such as Guido has shed on the seraphic features of his saints.

So striking, indeed, was the influence of this silent ecstasy, that Lord Mildenhall was

almost angry at the number of persons who, at the close of the concert, accosted him with more familiar greeting than usual, for the sole purpose of inquiring the name of his companion. Heaven knows, he had never been so questioned concerning his sour-faced Anne; and it seemed almost insulting to be forced to announce as his sister, one whom the magnates of the land regarded as a stranger. It was not the first time the Viscount had found occasion to blame the seclusion in which the Hargreaves lived immured.

Lady Mildenhall, meanwhile, peevish at the sensation her sister-in-law was creating, and unaccustomed to share with anybody the attention of her lumpish lord, insisted on hastening away the moment the concert was at an end. Morose and unsociable, she hated to witness in other women the graces in which she was so lamentably deficient; and instead of being allowed to chat for a few minutes in the refreshment-room with his

friends and neighbours, Lord Mildenhall was hurried down stairs, in search of cloaks and carriages.

As is the case with all royal entertainments, from which every one departs at the same moment, a tedious pause ensued. Lady Mildenhall grumbled and shivered; while his Lordship made his way again and again to the entrance. He even availed himself of the proffered services of a somewhat saturnine man with whom he had been conversing about Florence, and the grand-ducal balls:—an old Italian acquaintance, to whom Lady Mildenhall vouchsafed a bow ten degrees below freezing point.

Poor Margaret, anxious only lest the two carriages should not be announced together, so that, after all, the priority of the Mildenhall's departure might leave her alone, took no heed of anything but the names successively called. She had no eyes for her brother's companion. The friends of Reginald were rarely interesting. Moreover, the

interposing figure of the Marquis d'Altavilla, who was paying servile court to a dinner-giving Duchess, in their vicinity, completely obscured him.

At length, welcome sounds of "Lord Mildenhall's carriage—the Honourable Mrs. Hargreave's carriage!" greeted her from afar; repeated enviously by those about her, who were wearying for the announcement of their own. The selfish Anne clung instantly to the arm of her husband, and hurried him off towards the door; Lord Mildenhall contenting himself with glancing over his shoulder at his sister, who, flurried and embarrassed, was making her way through the crowd.

In a moment, an outstretched hand facilitated her progress. The saturnine stranger pressed eagerly past the thick duchess and thin diplomat: and before she had time to answer the question of "Mrs. Hargreave, will you give me leave to offer you my arm?" her own was taken. She was

carefully escorted through the throng; and as, on arriving at the grand entrance, crowded with attendants, her carriage proved to be the first, with the steps already let down, she was hurried into it before she had time to recover her breath, or do more than recognize in her companion a sedate, conventionalized edition of the once romantic Herbert Fanshawe!—

CHAPTER XI.

Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake,
As an awaken'd giant with a groan
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.

CRABBE.

AND thus, after so many years of absence and estrangement, those twain were fated to meet again :—parted in a troubled atmosphere—reunited in the brightest effulgence of worldly sunshine.

Such transitions are less rare than might be supposed ; especially in England, where custom sanctions so many imprudent

attachments, leading to disappointment and pain.

Mrs. Hargreave dwelt little on the circumstance. Her thoughts were engrossed by the fine music to which she had been listening; vexed only that her delight should have been unshared by her husband. But, alas! on arriving at home, she was hastily summoned to the nursery, where her little Mary was again suffering from a feverish relapse.

The following day, the Hargreaves were to have dined with Sir Thomas, in Berkeley Square: and, as the child was in no sort of danger, Margaret, aware that the banquet was to be one of her father-in-law's pompous displays, insisted that her husband should fulfil the engagement alone.

She would not, however, have supposed his company so great an acquisition to the party, could she have foreseen how speedily he would be put out of sorts by

witnessing his sister Lady Arthur's overgracious reception of Altavilla. The Neapolitan Marquis was a man against whom the honest-hearted Richard entertained an insurmountable antipathy. The stealthy deportment and saccharine phrases of the cunning Italian, whom he met frequently in official circles, inspired him with profound distrust. Nor was his countenance brightened on hearing the Marquis inquire of Lady Arthur whether the "biooteefool" Mrs. Hargreave, so much admired the preceding night at Buckingham Palace, was any relation to Sir Thomas?

"I would have asked the question of Fannsho'," said he; "but Fannsho' he was not return, after taking her to her carriage."

Julia glanced at her brother's face; and seeing it wear a sinister scowl, attributed to jealousy of his wife what was simply the result of disgust at her own coquetry. She hastened, however, to explain the relationship;

and presented her brother in form to the man with whom Richard Hargreave had long secretly promised himself never to be acquainted.

After a variety of glozing compliments on the beauty of Mrs. Hargreave, whose diamonds had made almost as favourable an impression on the calculating Neapolitan as the rich plate and rare wines of his host, Altavilla proceeded to ask leave, after the fashion of his country, to "remit his card at the door of Mrs. Hargreave." And though the bow of the man to whom he was endeavouring to recommend himself, was as repulsive as only a Great British bow, meaning to be uncivil, could possibly be, Altavilla added with a grateful smile, that probably his friend Fannsho' would officiate as his guide to the house, "since he had the honour of being a friend of the family."

Another refrigerating bow ; expressing

but too plainly Dick Hargreave's determination that neither the old acquaintance or the new should ever be admitted within his gates. Against Fanshawe, however, he entertained no grudge; except as pilot to the insinuating Italian, who was come to buy and sell the English fashionables, his dupes.

"Altavilla don't seem as great a favourite in this house as in most places where the feminine gender is in the ascendant?" whispered Barty Tomlinson to Lord Fitzmorton, raising his eyes from the tawdry album he had been pretending to examine. "His affectuous tones don't blend, somehow, with Dick Hargreave's plain-spoken matter-of-fact."

The young Earl did not choose to be the confederate of Tomlinson's sneer. He was too fond of Altavilla's Sunday dinners, composed of the best of bad company, the *crème de la crème* of foreign rouéism,

(though transacted with the most artful deference to the severities of English decorum,) to risk offending an Amphytrion of such rare qualifications; and turned a deaf ear to the little toady.

An admirable tactician, Altavilla had been scrupulous in paying his harbour-dues to secure an entrance into the port of English fashion, where he now lay at anchor. His banquets at Richmond and Greenwich had done as much for him in London, as, at Paris his *soupers fins* at the Café de Paris or Maison Dorée, after a *bal de l'Opéra*. And though many manly Englishmen besides Dick Hargreave detested his effeminate finalities, and could make nothing of one of the rougher sex who looked, when mounted on a horse, as uneasy as if bestriding a hyena, or in a battue winced and dodged every moment, as if within range of a Minie rifle or Infernal Machine, there were many boyish *roués*, who, because he shared their

orgies and flattered their vices, believed him to be "a good fellow, after all."

"How came it you never told us of your renewal of acquaintance with Mr. Fanshawe?" inquired Lady Arthur of her sister-in-law, when next she visited the cheerful morning room overlooking the river in Whitehall Gardens; where the convalescent little Mary, still extended on the sofa of honour, was exercising the skill of Uncle William in sketches made for her amusement, after the renowned style of

The young lady of Sweden,
Who went in a slow-train to Weedon.

"Because it passed wholly out of my mind," replied Margaret, calmly. "When I returned from the palace, our whole attention was absorbed by Mary's attack. Since then, I have seen no one but my brother, to whom, by the way, I *did* mention that Mr. Fanshawe had put me into the carriage."

“What matters it, whether you did or no?” interrupted William Mordaunt, pettishly. “Hargreave and I have met Fanshawe a dozen times since his arrival in town. Hargreave was talking to him yesterday for half-an-hour in the lobby of the House of Commons. But ten to one, Dick not think it worth while to mention it to *you*.”

“Yes; he told me at breakfast how much he thought Mr. Fanshawe improved. In his case, the old theory that the boy is father to the man, seems to have been disproved. My husband declares that there is not a vestige in him of our old acquaintance, the son of Sir Claude.”

Lady Arthur was reduced to play with her *breloques* to conceal her amazement. To what, then, was she to attribute her brother's ill-humour at the dinner in Berkeley Square? In presence of William Mordaunt, however, against whom she had a long-standing pique, she would not be caught at a disadvantage.

“Richard shows some tact,” said she, “in swimming for once with the current, which he is too apt to oppose. Mr. Fanshawe is universally popular. I heard him spoken of the other day at S.— House as the most agreeable man of the day; the only one, perhaps, who exhibits some tinge of the high-breeding of the old court. By the way, Margaret, it would not have hurt him to leave his card in Berkeley Square. Such an attention is due to a man of my father’s age, an intimate friend of Sir Claude Fanshawe’s.”

Mrs. Hargreave was busy picking up one of the scattered leaves of her brother’s comic sketches, and did not hear the suggestion.

“I hope Richard will give him a hint on the subject. Mr. Fanshawe is the sort of conversational man whom my father delights to see at his table; and however important he may think himself, he will find at our house a considerable circle of his friends.”

“Better empower *me* to tell him so, Lady

Arthur," said William Mordaunt, drily. "And I will take care to add that, ever since *you* presided over Sir Thomas's household, the *cuisine* has been all that the best palate and worst appetite could desire. Don't trust to Dick. He never gives messages; or if he does, in so absent a manner, that he is pretty sure of delivering them to the wrong person. *He* would be telling Ralph Hargreave and his Yankee wife to call upon Sir Thomas, and be asked to dinner."

"What a specimen of the softer sex!" continued he addressing his sister, after Lady Arthur, having accomplished her mission, was driven into a hasty departure. "Poor Julia,—poor, foolish, frivolous Julia! However Herbert Fanshawe may have progressed, *she*, at least, has remained stationary as leader of the Futilitarians."

"Lady Arthur enjoys life in her own way," replied his more indulgent sister. "Home-pursuits or home-affections, are foreign to her nature."

“Whereas the triumph of adding a countess or two per annum to her visiting-list,—of collecting fine people round her father’s dinner-table,—and exhibiting fine dresses in crowded heated rooms, night after night,—constitutes her notion of human happiness. Miserable man that I should have been, Meg, with such a doll stuffed with bran for my wife or sister!”—

“My sister-in-law’s views and tastes accord perfectly with those of her father,” replied Margaret, mildly. Sir Thomas is shocked at *our* hum-drum way of life. He would fain see our names continually in the papers ; and quarrelled with his son for refusing to allow my face to figure in an Annual.”

“Ay ! He would have rejoiced that such people as Mrs. Brampton Brylls should hail the Honourable Mrs. Hargreave, described in the magnificent prose of the Album of Court Beauties !” said William, laughing. “Sir Thomas was always a tuft-hunter. I have seen his son put to the blush in former

days, by his flagrant toadyism of anything with a coronet on its head. From that species of snobbism, Heaven be thanked, my friend Dick is free."

"Too much so, perhaps ; for his own independence of spirit causes him to judge harshly of the motives of others. He accuses even his cousin Ralph of subservience to rank and station."

"Not Ralph, surely ! Only his American wife ; as keen after lords and ladies, as a beagle after a hare ! What would you have ? To the inquiring mind of a Boston Corinne, such splendours are natural curiosities. The fair Virginia hunts up coronets and Garters as we, if we visited China, should look out for little feet and Mandarins of the First Button. She told me the other day, she would give worlds to be invited to Mildenhall Abbey, that she might get 'an insight into Feudal Times.' "

"I can find readier excuses for that sort of curiosity," said Margaret, "than for the

restless aspirings of my sister-in-law. Lady Arthur is bent upon establishing herself in the great world by a brilliant marriage. Even in girlhood, Julia regarded wedlock as a means and not an end ; and, untaught by experience, would rather be a miserable fine lady, than the happiest of wives."

"Then why baulk her fancy ? There are plenty of gouty peers who would jump at so handsome a nurse, reinforced by so handsome an independence."

"May she never find one ! In the first place, because there is always a chance that she may soften into natural feelings ; in the second—forgive my selfishness—(the foot of clay peeps out at last, William) if she should marry so well as to desert Sir Thomas, what is to become of *us* ?—We should be forced to spend the greater part of our time at Dursley and Oak Hill."

"Dreadful alternative ! Two of the most charming places in the kingdom !"

"Not to me, dear William. Dursley

Park is connected with the most painful scenes of my life. I never pass the lodge-gates, that a cloud does not come over my spirits. Lady Arthur is often severe upon our mania for spending so large a share of our holidays at Bardsel Tower ; and it would be scarcely gracious to tell her that, independent of motives of gratitude towards that good old friend who has been twice a mother to me and mine, I delight in the simple habits of the place. There, I can enjoy the free air of the country. There, I am not over-ridden by pompous country neighbours. There I am completely happy."

"And so you will be at Dursley, some of these days, when you are its mistress, and can reform its vulgar pretentiousness."

Mrs. Hargreave shook her head.

"Let no man in this world rely upon his neighbour's consistency," cried William, "far less upon his own. Here am I, in my youth a very Herod, who would have shot

down a brood of children as cheerfully as a covey of partridges, wasting my time (which is the property of the Queen's majesty) in amusing an ailing little girl. There is Dick, who, at one time, I believe, thought seriously of enlisting, or becoming mate to a merchant-vessel, rather than be forced by his father into Parliament, now the most pains-taking of plodding members!"—

"Yes, because he *is* a working member. My husband objected only to the pretension of playing the orator for the purpose of official advancement."

"No matter. He spoke like a good one the other night on Ralph Hargreave's Fiscal Reform Bill; precisely because no one had urged him to open his lips. It came naturally to him. The world has shaken him into his place, and into a sense of his duties. And so, Madam my sister, will it be with yourself. As Lady Hargreave of Dursley Park, you will acquire a taste for the spot

and habits of life entailed from generation to generation on your posterity."

"Either you mistake me or I mistake myself," was Margaret's steady reply. "Some birds build in the loftiest tree, others on the ground. If I know my own nature, *I* prefer the lowly nest."

"Ay! coupled with the privilege of the lark, to soar from it at will into the skies."

"Rather the privilege of the linnct—to sing my fledgelings to rest," whispered Margaret, pointing to the little invalid, who had dropped off to sleep during their grave discussion. "Seriously, dearest William, I know not whether it is because I was born under the roof of a parsonage, or whether I inherit my mother's debility, or my poor dear father's indolence; but I *prefer* an obscure home and quiet life, to any splendour this world could offer."

"Sweet Anne Boleyn!" was William's ironical rejoinder, "do you expect me to play

the part of the old Gentlewoman, and listen to your declarations that—

You swear 'tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow?—

Don't expect it of me, Margaret. When your time comes, you will ascend your throne as contentedly as other hereditary princesses. Ay! and do it honour with the best of them."

Little did either brother or sister surmise how speedily the prediction would be accomplished. At the close of the session, Sir Thomas and his daughter were to repair to Oak Hill; while Richard and his family completed the summer in the pleasant coppices of Bardsel Tower; enabling the most maternal of spinsters to take her turn in spoiling the lovely children who were to convey the name of Hargreave to a future generation. They were all to meet together

at Dursley, when the shooting season commenced.

They *did* meet there.—But it was for no sporting or festive purpose!—The family was reunited at the mouth of the family vault; to behold the man so enamoured of worldly consequence consigned to the nothingness of the dust. Sir Thomas had died suddenly; under mental excitement which called into play some chronic infirmity—aneurism—or more probably ossification of the heart,—for what human heart could be less elastic.

Barty Tomlinson always maintained that the wealthy baronet expired in a fit of rage, on being applied to by the Marchese d'Altavilla for an augmentation of Lady Arthur's jointure; a man so low-born and low-bred being unable to discern the difference between the "rascally foreigners," whom he supported by subscribing to Polish associations and Mansion House balls, and the representative of one of the first houses in

Italy. Certain it was that Altavilla contrived to be suddenly ordered to the Bohemian baths, on finding that two thousand paltry pounds a-year, constituted the inheritance of the fair widow whom he had adored while presiding over the expenditure of her father's thirty thousand ; and as he was, shortly afterwards, recalled by his Double Sicilian master, and has never returned to renew his mercenary courtship, there may be some truth in the report that he has made a Marchesa of the heiress of a wealthy merchant of Lucca ; to whose olive gardens the salads of civilized Europe stand largely indebted.

As the travelling carriage of the new Sir Richard rolled through the lodge-gates of Dursley, on their road to the closely-shuttered mansion containing the mortal remains of him who had never seemed to concern himself about aught that was more than mortal, Lady Hargreave involuntarily reverted to the confession she had recently made to her

brother. More than ever, she felt a cloud come over her spirit. More than ever she felt conscious of forebodings connected with the spot —

She drew the little girl who was sleeping on her knee more closely to her bosom, and defied that evil augury. But even while defying it, silent tears dropped from her eyes on the bright ringlets of the sleeping child.—

CHAPTER XII.

Blest in each other, but to no excess,
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness,
Yet strange would either think it, to be told
Their love was cooling, or their love was cold.

CRABBE.

THE unities having been already flagrantly violated in the foregoing pages, it requires only a slight extension of imagination on the part of the courteous reader, to suppose two years elapsed from the period which admitted Sir Richard and Lady Hargreave as sovereign masters of Dursley Park and its princely revenues.

The forebodings of the Dean's daughter had been thoroughly discountenanced ; for if ever human happiness flourished on earth, it was under that well-fated roof. Their children were healthy, lovely, and promising ; their mutual confidence was immaculate. The dearest brother of the one, was the dearest friend of the other ; and above all, instead of succeeding to one of those neglected estates and dilapidated houses, which, as in the case of the new Lord Mildenhall, absorb the resources and leisure of years ere they regain the state from which old age and covetousness have suffered them to be degraded, they had only to step into the enjoyment of every perfected luxury.—Their utmost desire was to *modify* rather than *increase* the ostentatious splendours of the place.

But alas ! if the old Adam survives in fallen man, the ancient serpent still flourishes in social temptations. In the second year of his reign, Sir Richard, roused into fatal

comparisons by a visit to Lord Fitzmorton, the new lord lieutenant of his county, suddenly perceived the necessity of adding a library and audit-room to the mansion which had sufficed the wants of the Dukes of Hereford. An architect—a sort of master of the revels appurtenant now-a-days to most aristocratic households,—was summoned from town; and within four-and-twenty hours of his arrival, Sir Richard was made to perceive that he and their Graces of Hereford had been imposed upon into residing in a hovel. The doors at Dursley were too narrow, the windows a world too wide, the roof unsuited to the climate. The staircase was contracted, the portico vulgar, the offices dark; Mr. Stucco, (Sir Simon Stucco, I believe,) wondered how a family so opulent could have so long made up its mind to be thus miserably lodged.

Made to *perceive*, is perhaps too strong a term. Made to *admit* would be more

correct. Easy-natured as ever, Sir Richard was scarcely at the pains to contravert his architect's decree that, since the faults of his family residence were to be partially corrected, it would be better to reform them altogether. If they were to be plunged into brick and mortar, or Portland stone and mortar, a few ton of rubbish more or less, and a few months' inconvenience more or less, could matter little to the proprietor.

"Leave it to me, Sir Richard," said Stucco, when his victim was enlarging on the simple beauty of the grand old library at Morton Castle; "Leave your house to *me*, and I will make it the most complete thing in the kingdom."

Lady Hargreave, though distrustful of such large promises, to her shame be it spoken, uttered not a word of dissent. She requested to see neither the plans nor the estimates. Anything that promised to metamorphose Dursley Park into other than

the Dursley Park of former years, was welcome to her feelings.

Nor did William Mordaunt, pleased whenever *she* was pleased, hazard a remonstrance to his brother-in-law. It was only a faithful old friend—it was only Elinor Maitland, now on the eve of marriage with the object of her early choice, to whom Sir Richard had just presented a living of £250 a year,—who ventured to say :

“Are you not sacrificing months and years of domestic comfort? Are you not tempting Providence, like the Babylonians of old, by wanting to outbuild your neighbours?—Dear Richard! all the wealth you have inherited equals not that priceless pearl — Content!”

But we argue in vain to those whose resolutions are already taken. The plans sent down by Stucco were exquisite, the estimates plausible. A clerk of the works, with an adequate staff, was soon established

on the premises; and all was rapidly placed in the most admired disorder. Sir Richard gave readily in to the excitement. Something of the innate restlessness of the Hargreaves was beginning to agitate his tranquil nature. The stimulus of emulation had some share in his enthrallment. Just as his cousin Ralph's parliamentary activity had roused him into action—perchance because indignant at finding the question “which of the two Hargreaves was on that Committee?” frequently answered by “Ralph, of course, the other is a dead letter,”—the idea of surpassing the country-gentlemanlike comfort exhibited by Fanshawe's flimsy fellow-yachter, Fitzmorton, spurred him into needless expenditure. He was neither envious nor jealous; but like many a generous-tempered horse, could not bear to be out-done.

Of all excitements, that of building is next to gambling (or novel-writing) the most

absorbing. As Byron sings of another species of construction—

'Tis to create, and in creating, live
A being more intense ;

and Sir Richard Hargreave found that to create in oak and granite served to double his existence.

Margaret was naturally the sufferer. Her husband's thoughts were engrossed, his time bespoken ; and she was more thrown on her own resources than she had ever been since her marriage. The state of the house precluded all possibility of hospitality. William was detained in London by his official duties ; and the Clitheroes and Lady Arthur were by no means people to invite for the social enjoyment of a small family circle.

From the moment Elinor Maitland's marriage took her to a distant county, Lady Hargreave depended for amusement solely

upon occasional visits to Morton Castle and Delavile Abbey ; on returning home from which, Dursley looked drearier than ever.

Mrs. Pleydell, now old and infirm, was occasionally heard to mutter over her cards that, considering all things, it was little to the credit of Lady Hargreave, as daughter to their once popular Dean, that the Dursley carriage was scarcely seen in R——, from year's end to year's end. But who that knew how the Mordaunts had suffered in that grim old Deanery, (now the battle-field of fiery polemic skirmishing) could affect surprise that to the Dean's daughter the sight of the flourishing Elizabethan Office of Messrs. Lazenby and Son was distasteful ; and a glimpse of the old Cathedral an afflicting *memento mori*.

Isaac Barnes, the stern and unpopular but right-hearted Dean, alone entered into Lady Hargreave's feelings ; and when they met at county dinner-parties, testified, by a cordial pressure of the hand, his sympathy in the

motives which restrained their intercourse to a ceremonious exchange of cards.

Even her annual visit to Bardsel was less satisfactory than of old. The nine years which had converted Margaret into a beautiful woman of eight-and-twenty, had converted Aunt Martha into a cross one of sixty-eight. The death of her brother had touched her nearly. Estranged from him during the latter years of his life by the part she had taken in promoting her nephew's marriage, the feeble-mindedness into which much time had depressed her, produced regret and self-accusation. Aunt Martha had outlived, not only her contemporaries, but her strength of mind.

Sir Thomas, Lady Hargreave, Ebenezer were gone; and she detested the new-fangledness of the generation by which they were succeeded. The world was moving too fast for her. Goody Rawson was no longer there, to exhaust her peevishness by a wrangle. Nero lay stuffed in a colossal glass-

case in the hall ; and Margaret, the only person whom she still loved, had to pay the penalty of favouritism, by listening to her grumblings against Ralph Hargreave's folly in setting up as a lecturer to mechanics far better informed than himself ; or against the presumption of Mrs. Virginia Hargreave, of Hargreen (she was careful to call her Mrs. Virginia Hargreave of Hargreen, to distinguish her from Mrs. Martha Hargreave, of Bardsel), in erecting in their humble village a model factory, model School of Design, model Lyceum, and model Gymnasium, after the fashion of her transatlantic Athens. "As if Old England had anything to learn from New England," mumbled the old lady. "*That* would be teaching your grandmother *indeed !*"

Sir Richard had ceased to accompany his wife to the North. The first year, he was occupied with rounding the corners of the vast property — landed, funded,

colonial—to which he had succeeded. By the following autumn, he had girded on the cares of an improver; and Lady Hargreave, who represented him in the North, had consequently no screen against the missiles perpetually and reciprocally discharged between Bardsel and Hargreen. The children were in some degree withdrawn from her care by the superintendence of a nursery governess, as strict and omniscient as heirship to such a fortune as their father's is supposed to necessitate; and on the whole, much as she loved Aunt Martha, she found it as great a relief to return to Dursley, as it had been to lose sight of it for a time.

Had any one inquired of Sir Richard Hargreave,—a man little in the habit of self-communing,—what produced his intense interest in his improvements at Dursley, or what had warmed up his early political indifference into such eager sympathy with

the great public reformers of the age, he would probably have attributed the change to the usual progress of the human mind from "gay to grave—from lively to severe." But there was far more in the transition than was dreamed of in his philosophy. Between him and his beautiful Margaret, there was little unanimity of nature, taste, or pursuit: and he was unconsciously driven to provide occupation for his mind's leisure. The idiosyncrasy inherited from a feeble mother and inert father, assumed, in Lady Hargreave, the form of moral indifference; nor had the nature of her early training invigorated her powers of mind. Happy and happy-making in her quiet home, she had done little to improve herself. Her efforts to return the fond affection of Dick Hargreave, seemed to have exhausted her faculties. From the moment of her marriage, her life became as much a matter of routine as that of the popular Dean of R——.

English custom has decreed, perhaps in-

judiciously, that women of the upper classes should be reared in ladylike ignorance of temporal interests, and the practical business of life. Hence arises an apparent coldness towards a thousand occupations—a thousand responsibilities,—which occupy the minds of their husbands. In France, where woman, both as wife and daughter, enjoys her vested rights in the family property, and is required, as a domestic virtue, to exercise her discretion in its economy and direction, uniformity of worldly interests often supplies, or at all events conceals, the absence of warmer affections.

As a girl at Hephanger, Margaret had been instructed in crochet-work, and the mysteries of Berlin wool; was skilful with her pencil, and as sweet a singer as Desdemona. But of the value of money, or the comparative rights of rich and poor, she knew no more than her lap-dog. Near as she had been to destitution, she was unable to appreciate the importance of an income such as

that of her husband; or the duties, public and private, involved in its administration. It appeared to *her* that Sir Richard devoted far too much attention to his agents and lawyers—his bailiffs and farmers. She did not so much as render the honour due to his generosity when, on coming into his fortune, he presented his friend William—her brother William—with a deed of gift to the value of ten thousand pounds. Unaware of the rarity of such actions, she fancied it only a commendable employment of his loose money. She would have given it herself: she concluded that most others would have done the same. While Lord Mildenhall shrugged his shoulders at such an act of Quixotism, as “worthy an ostentatious upstart, capable of any excess of vulgar extravagance,” Lady Hargreave expressed neither gratitude nor surprise.

Nor was this the only subject on which Sir Richard derived no counsel or sympathy

from his wife. Aware of her total ignorance of financial economy, or even the commonest questions of administrative prudence, he was too considerate, too thoroughly good-natured, to bore her by requiring her participation in his affairs. But a separation of interests was thus insensibly created: and, in married life, any separation should be guarded against. The very smallest may widen into a chasm.

The month which, during two following autumns, Margaret had spent at Bardsel Tower, habituated Sir Richard to her absence,—formerly deplored as the severest of trials. He was too much absorbed in his peremptory occupations to perceive the change; and, being frequently called up to town by business with his lawyers, prolonged his bachelor sojourn in Whitehall Gardens and enjoyed his dinner at his Club, as a rational man might do; but not like the devoted husband of other days.

“It is no small comfort to us miserable sinners,” said Barty Tomlinson to William Mordaunt, one day, in the reading-room at the Athenæum, “to perceive that Sir Charles Grandison, married, is little more circumspect than Sir Charles Anybody-else, single. If I were the charming Lady Hargreave, I should find a word or two to urge against my husband’s declaration of independence.

“No one doubts your finding *words* on any subject, my dear fellow. It is your meaning that puzzles us.”

“I mean, in the present case, that I left Lady Hargreave and her children the other day, on the Kendal railway, making a solitary tour; and that I find Sir Richard in town, prowling surreptitiously in Pall Mall.”

“And now try what mischief you can extract out of these simple facts!”—cried Mordaunt. “But don’t expect me to undertake the vindication of my brother-in-law; I would not do him so great an injury. Were you capable of understanding the smallest of

his virtues, or if you could point out a speck or blemish in his character, I might think it worth while to take up arms in his cause. As it is, Tomlinson, do your worst!—Shoot your arrows at the sun, and welcome!”—

“Come, come, come,—something too much of ‘Ercles’ vein’” cried the Homunculus with a provoking laugh. “If you take things in this lofty strain, my dear Mordaunt, I shall fancy that poor Hargreave has a weakness for Pratt’s or *les coulisses*; or that his business in town is a suit in the Court of Arches.”

“A peppery fellow, poor Mordaunt!” he did not fail to add to a brother gossip of his own inches, (an official of the sixteenth magnitude, who, as the Pacolet of the fine ladies, was known by the name of “Early Intelligence,”) while William stalked indignantly away. “But there is some excuse for his thundering in defence of Dick Hargreave. He has pocketed a famous retaining fee. We who saw the making of the

Hargreave and Mordaunt match, would not, however, feel much surprised at its breaking. In England, a *mariage de convenance* seldom prospers. The climate don't suit it. They order these things better in France."

Words so pregnant with mischief as these, dropped in a club like seeds scattered by the wayside, though profitless to the husbandman, seldom fail to bring forth fruit. In those idle circles, where, when facts are not forthcoming to supply the morning's tittle-tattle, suppositions are hazarded in their stead; and where, as Gozlan says, "*Heureux qui apporte une banqueroute inédite*," it soon came to be reported that the Hargreaves were less happy together than formerly.

"No shooting-parties at Dursley, this year. No breakfasts there, when the hounds meet in the neighbourhood," was Lord Fitzmorton's observation to Herbert Fanshawe, who listened demurely to his complaints. "Now the Hargreaves have come into their fortune, they don't seem to know what to do

with it. I always thought my friend Dick a bit of a snob ; and even that pretty wife of his (Mildenhall's sister) has failed to *décrasser* him. A lovely creature, certainly, though Barty Tomlinson calls her the Swans'-down Muff. But if I knew where such another was to be found, it should be mine at any cost. People call me a confirmed old bachelor. By Jove, they would not say so long, could I obtain a wife like Lady Hargreave !”

Herbert Fanshawe answered not a word. It was not for so cautious a diplomat to announce his own views and wishes concerning the DEAN'S DAUGHTER.

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